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# CHURCH HISTORY



Vol. IV

DECEMBER, 1935

No. 4

LORD HERBERT OF CHERBURY, APOSTLE OF ETHICAL  
THEISM

*Charles Lyttle*

THE ORIGIN OF THE GERMAN EVANGELICAL SYNOD OF  
NORTH AMERICA

*Carl E. Schneider*

ROBERT J. BRECKINRIDGE AND THE SLAVERY ASPECT  
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN SCHISM OF 1837

*Edmund A. Moore*

LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY

IN MEMORIAM

BOOK REVIEWS

*Published by*  
The American Society of Church History

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## LORD HERBERT OF CHERBURY, APOSTLE OF ETHICAL THEISM

CHARLES LYTTLE

*The Meadville Theological School, Chicago*

"One fair day in summer, my casement window being opened towards the south, the sun shining clear, and no wind stirring, I took my book, *De Veritate*, in my hand, and kneeling on my knees, devoutly said these words:—'O thou eternal God, author of the light which now shines upon me, and Giver of all inward illuminations, I do beseech Thee, of thine infinite goodness, to pardon a greater request than a sinner ought to make; I am not satisfied enough whether I shall publish this book, *De Veritate*; if it be for Thy glory, I beseech Thee to give me some sign from heaven; if not, I shall suppress it.' I had no sooner spoken these words, but a loud though yet gentle noise came from the heavens, for it was like nothing on earth, which did so comfort and cheer me, that I took my petition as granted and that I had the sign I demanded, whereupon also I resolved to print my book. And now I sent my book to be printed at Paris . . . without suffering it to be divulged to others than to such as I thought might be worthy readers of it."<sup>1</sup>

The book in question, of which this experience may be regarded as a divine imprimatur, duly appeared in Paris in the summer of 1624 under the title *De Veritate; Prout distinguitur a Revelatione, a verisimili, possibili et falso*. It was dedicated "*Universo Humano Generi*" by the author, Edward Herbert,

<sup>1</sup> From *The Autobiography of Lord Herbert of Cherbury*, edited by Sidney Lee in 1886, p. 248. *The Autobiography* has been frequently published. The edition by W. D. Howells, 1872, the 1906 revision by Sir Sidney Lee, and the recent edition by C. H. Herford, 1928 have chief value.

Knight of the Bath and (until July, 1624) Ambassador from James I to the King of France.<sup>2</sup>

Before proceeding to a study of Lord Herbert's religious philosophy, as set forth in *De Veritate* and other works to be considered, it will be worth while briefly to survey the main events of his life and the singular characteristics of his personality, all of which acquire unusual significance from the fact that he has been commonly regarded as the "father of English Deism."<sup>3</sup> If the term "Deism" is taken in its usual meaning, the attribution of its paternity to Lord Herbert seems to the writer either as erroneous or as grossly indiscriminate—which is practically as bad; and a very ponderable amount of evidence to support this contention lies in the character and habits of the man himself.

Mr. Edward Herbert was a member of the great Herbert family of the Welsh border. His pious and cultured mother, a dear friend of Dr. John Donne, poet, theologian, and Dean of St. Paul's, established her household at Oxford to give her eldest son every scholarly advantage. Four years in University College (1596-1600) made the precocious youth well versed in the classics and enamored of the moral teachings of the great ancients, especially Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Plutarch. Several Latin poems written in his young manhood contain fervent apostrophes to virtue that remind us of Milton's academic pro-lusions and the *Epistle to Diodati*.<sup>4</sup> After an early marriage, and his admission to the Order of the Bath by Queen Elizabeth, who was attracted by his striking beauty, Mr. Herbert left England for years of travel on the Continent (1608 on), which brought him into association with eminent captains (Montmorency, Prince Rupert), and scholars (Casaubon, Galileo and others) of the time. He had occasion to learn at first hand the horrors of the intolerance of the religious wars, and the moral cynicism and atheism which they, as well as Renaissance hu-

2 The only known extant copy of the 1624 edition has recently been acquired by the British Museum. The MS of this edition is in the library of Jesus College, Cambridge.

3 Cp. as the most recent instance the use of the phrase in *Religious Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, by J. M. Creed and J. S. Boys Smith, 1934, p. xv. Also see John Orr's *English Deism*, 1934, p. 61 on. Again, Basil Willey, *The Seventeenth Century Background*, 1934, p. 121.

4 Cp. the poems of Herbert, *Autobiography* (Lee 1886) pp. 31 on, with the "Prolusions" (especially the 7th) and the "Epistle to Diodati" in P. B. Tilliard, *Milton, Private Correspondence and Academic Exercises*, 1932, p. 13, p. 104. W. E. Channing, *Milton* (1826) p. 51 on.

manism, had engendered. On a visit to Rome in 1615 he assured the master of the English College that "he intended no affront to the Roman Catholic religion, since for his part he loved everybody that was of a virtuous and pious life and thought the errors on what side soever were more worthy pity than hate and took leave of him courteously and spent a month's time examining the antiquities of that place which by confession and absolution wielded a greater empire over the consciences of men than all the arts of the statesmen."<sup>5</sup> Then he went to visit Cicero's villa at Tusculum. Returning to Rome he attended a papal consistory, but departed suddenly before receiving the pope's blessing, and thus got himself into the bad graces of the Inquisition.

As the years passed, the captain adventurous developed into a man of the grand manner in affairs and letters, accomplished in the elegancies of the court and the deftness of diplomacy—a handsome, gallant soldier-scholar, a cup of the rich, sparkling vintage of Sydney, Essex and Raleigh. Yet he never forsook the habits of devotion, as well as the pursuit of virtue he had learned in his mother's home. Every Sunday was scrupulously allotted to meditation and prayer, with a sermon from his chaplain.<sup>6</sup>

From 1621 to 1624 he was ambassador to France, and at first pleased his sovereign well; but finally his anti-Spanish, if not anti-Catholic animus became too strong for the devious policies of James I, who recalled him, as Sir Henry Wotton had been recalled from Venice, because Herbert, honest though a diplomat, refused to lie for his monarch to the extent of betraying James' own daughter, Princess Elizabeth and the embattled Protestants of the Palatinate and Bohemia. Possibly, also the vindictiveness of Père Séguierend, the Jesuit confessor of the King of France, against whose intolerant preaching Herbert had complained to the Queen, had something to do with his recall.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Autobiography*, p. 155.

<sup>6</sup> See Preface to W. D. Howell's edition of the *Autobiography*, p. 10 for evidence from his writings. He seems to have been especially fond of the sermons of a certain London preacher named Smith. Of a Latitudinarian divine of that name, J. Hunt, *Religious Thought in England*, p. 425, gives an interesting account, disclosing many resemblances to Lord Herbert's views.

<sup>7</sup> That Lord Herbert surmised as much seems obvious from his own words: "What Père Séguierend did afterwards in the way of performing his threat I know not; but sure I am that, had I been ambitious of worldly greatness, I might often have remembered his words, though, as I ever loved my book and a quiet life more than any busy preferments, I did frustrate and render vain his greatest power to hurt me." (*Autobiography*, p. 246). Lee, whose Introduction to the work is full of inaccuracies and misinterpretations, quite overlooks this suggestion concerning the recall!

At any rate, Sir Edward Herbert came home to England in July, 1624, the royal favor lost, his public career virtually ended and his finances sadly embarrassed. But at last he was free to send *De Veritate* to be published at Paris, for the dictates of diplomatic prudence no longer bound him. At this point the *Autobiography*, written when he was over sixty, breaks off, rather appropriately, for the rest of Lord Herbert's life (1624-48) was devoted to scholarship and the publication of a long series of works amplifying and arguing his religious views in the most persistent literary propaganda on behalf of a startlingly heterodox position that Europe had known since the works of Abailard.<sup>8</sup>

The research work involved in these productions, consisting chiefly in the reading of many Greek and Latin authors on the subject of ethnic and archaic religious beliefs and usages, was prodigious. Yet with amazing versatility, since moved by intense zeal, the soldier exchanged the sword for the pen and buried himself in his library at Montgomery Castle. The personal data for the years from 1625 to 1640 are very scanty. Only the tribute paid him by Ben Jonson in days when Lord Herbert had little to give a panegyrist but his gratitude, reveals in what esteem he was held by a small circle of cultivated friends:

If men get praise for some one virtue, then  
What man art thou, who art so many men!  
All-virtuous Herbert! on whose every part  
Truth might spend all her voice, fame all her art!  
Whether thy learning they would trace, or wit,  
Or valor, or thy judgment seasoning it;  
Thy standing upright to thyself; thy ends  
Like straight; thy piety to God and friends;  
Their latter praise would still the greater be,  
And yet, they all together, less than thee.

The Civil War disturbed his peaceful labors in the castle beyond Shrewsbury. On account of his Royalist predilections and family connections, Parliament seized him, occupied his castle, then pensioned him, under surveillance, in London. But

<sup>8</sup> *De Veritate*, with a new preface to the "*lectoris integri et illibati iudicii*," was republished in 1633 (London); 1636, Paris; 1639 Paris, in a French translation, which Basil Willey and John Orr use; 1645 in London. *De Causis Errorum, una cum tractatu De Religione Laici et Appendice Ad Sacerdotes et Poemata aliqua*, London, 1645. In addition, he had composed before his death the *Dialogue between a Tutor and his Pupil* and *De Religione Gentilium*, both published posthumously.

he saved his library! In these dark years he found his solace in writing and publishing, possibly with oblique reference, as we shall see, to the decisions of the Puritan divines sitting at Westminster. Broken in health, but not at all bitter in spirit he wrote his famous *Autobiography*, not so much as a political apologia of his career, as Lee regards it, but as a religious and intellectual appraisal of his life; not to gratify his vanity, or inspire a posthumous fame for himself, but to counsel and guide his posterity. Egotism there is in the book, of course; but its effect is magnified by Lord Herbert's obvious desire to clear his record of false slanders. Youthful gallantries and chivalries are related with reminiscent relish, to be sure, but with the palpable desire to explain motives and exonerate himself from imputations of dishonor. Yet the pervading tone of the *Autobiography* is pedagogical, philosophic, moral, religious, as its author intended: "I profess to write with all truth and sincerity, as scorning ever to deceive or speak false to any one and therefore detesting it much more when I am under obligation of speaking to those near to me. As my age is now past three score, it will be fit to recollect my former actions, to the intent that I may both reform what was amiss, and so make my peace with God, as also to comfort myself in those things which, according to God's great grace and favor, have been done according to the rules of conscience, virtue and honor."<sup>9</sup>

The *Autobiography* is permeated by this spirit of scrupulous candor. Indeed, this ideal is the major motif not only of his first book but of all his works and days. Lord Herbert despised lying, stealing—which explains his disparagement of Bacon in the *History of Henry VIII*—cowardice, perfidy, chicanery,—in conduct, in statecraft, in war, in religion. Hence he narrates, with amazing frankness, his lapse into adultery while away from his wife in France<sup>10</sup>; his remorse therefor and his lifelong struggle to conquer irascibility. Many pages are devoted to explaining and commending his "Catholic Truth"—that virtue and piety are the best worship of God and way to felicity in this life and the next.<sup>11</sup> With the reverence befitting his mem-

<sup>9</sup> *Autobiography*, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208, p. 209: "To conclude this passage, which I unwillingly mention, I must protest again, before God, that I never delighted in that or any other sin."

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59 on, e. g.: "And this I dare say, that a virtuous man may not only go securely through all the religions but all the laws in the world and whatsoever obstructions he meet, obtain both an inward peace and an outward

bership in the Church of England he asked, when death approached, for its last offices. But he made it plain that he subscribed to no ecclesiastical doctrine of their supernatural efficacy; and they were denied him. His theistic faith, transcending all creedal shibboleths, was set forth in his will, and in this epitaph of his own composition:

"A man who was so free from hope or fear  
To have or lose this ordinary light,  
That when to elements his body turned,  
He knew that his immortal soul should find above  
With his Creator peace, joy, faith and love."

The same sure and serene piety of the good conscience is in a prayer found among his papers:

O God, by whose power and wisdom all things at first were made, and by whose providence and wisdom they are continued and preserved: Still behold, from thine everlasting dwelling place above . . . thy creature . . . in this lower world." (Grateful that he was) "brought into this world a living, free and reasonable creature. Thou hast admitted this frail dust to so high a dignity as to love Thee, Infinite and Eternal Beauty; Thou hast written in my heart a desire ever to imitate and be like Thee, and hast in many ways enabled me to the performance of it. . . . Thou hast begun in me a desire of eternal bliss and hast given me a hope and also a faith which doth assure me that this desire cannot be in vain . . .

It is perhaps superfluous to point out that such devoutness, such high moral seriousness of inward life, are not customarily associated with the name of Deist. Indeed, it is likely that most Deists of the eighteenth century would have felt scandalized at such subjectivity, such a correlation of virtue with devotion to God, such serious intention to live as ever in the great Taskmaster's eye! Lord Herbert's life at least does not support his designation as "the father of English Deism." What then of his system of religious philosophy that we may best call "Catholic Truth"; to the exposition and advocacy of which he gave half his mature years and the labors of the long propaganda I have related?

*De Veritate*, perhaps the only book of rationalist religious views for which divine sanction has ever been sought, had been

welcome . . . this virtue, therefore, I recommend to my posterity as the greatest perfection he can attain to in this life and the pledge of eternal happiness thereafter; there being none that can justly hope of an union with the supreme God who doth not come to him in this life in virtue and goodness as he can; and if human frailty do interrupt this union . . . it will be fit, by a serious repentance, to expiate and emaculate those faults, and for the rest, trust to the mercy of God, his Creator, Redeemer, Preserver."

fermenting in his mind long before its publication.<sup>12</sup> In argument and reputation a work of metaphysics, it is in reality the product of deep feeling and the most zealous religious convictions. The absorption of his youthful interest in the moral philosophy of the classic tradition; the folly and evil of religious bigotry that he everywhere perceived in his European travels; the asperity of his relations in Paris with Spanish and French Catholics, are all to be felt, even if not expressed, in his daring manifesto of freethought theism. His residence in Paris, with Grotius to tell him indignantly of the Arminian conflict, with Descartes to stress the need of mathematical certitude in philosophy and religion, with the underground skepticism of the Libertines and Lucretians, balanced by the sober Stoic idealism of du Vair, Bodin, and Charron—Paris brought his convictions and his zeal to a focus. Desiring to help earnest souls find the right way of salvation among the warring sects, and to abate the tragedy of religious fratricide,<sup>13</sup> he proposed to examine the crucial question of religious truth—content, criteria, and practical bearings—without prejudice or self-interest, but freely and frankly. He would disclose to his readers the pristine, divine deposit of truth in their own minds, and thus provide them with a kind of spiritual chart and compass for life, as well as means to distinguish the true and necessary from the false and non-essential in all doctrines, ceremonies and institutions of religion. In thus disclosing universal truth, Lord Herbert felt he was helping God, whose universal Providence implanted a universal intuition of saving truth in every soul and race of man.

Coming now to the content of *De Veritate*, let us abjure at the outset both explanation and critique of its noetic theories<sup>14</sup> whose complexity stultified whatever ingenuity they pos-

12 The very audacity of the title alone is amazing, for it boldly differentiates truth and revelation, classing the latter with simple possibilities.

13 Expressions of such spiritual sympathy are numerous in his works. The first paragraph of the Address to the Reader (*De Veritate*, 1624) says: "Hinc tot sectae, schismata, divisiones, subdivisiones, confusiones ex quibus ingenia doctorum, conscientiae indoctorum miserè torquentur. Dum modo hii, modo illi, se veros in doctrina suis, reliquos falsarios, mendaces, impostores clamitant." (p. 3).

14 The outline of the noetic system may be found in Ueberweg and in Höffding; but clearer expositions and more acute criticisms are those of C. F. Rémusat, *Histoire de la Philosophie en Angleterre*, 1878, p. 212 on; the same author's *Lord Herbert de Cherbury*, 1874, p. 685; C. Güttler, *Eduard, Lord Herbert von Cherbury*, Muenchen, 1897, p. 95 on; H. Scholz, *Die Religions-Philosophie von Herbert von Cherbury*, 1914, p. 20 on. C. C. J. Webb, *Studies in the History of Natural Religion*, 1914, p. 381 on. W. Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 1923, II, 246 on.

sessed<sup>15</sup> and whose execrable, Donne-esque Latin phrasing often discouraged the most patient scholar from exploring for the nuggets of gold in the sand. The author's central meaning and purpose is essentially religious, and not epistemological at all. Briefly stated, it is this: Man is born, by the universal benevolence of God, with the inherent capacity for sensing the truth most vital to his temporal and eternal well-being, just as he is born with sensory faculties for understanding objective reality. This natural instinct, rooted in self-preservation here and hereafter, is constituted of five universal notions (*notitiae communes*), which are the catholic truths of religion: God is; worship is due him; piety conjoined with virtue or a righteous conformity of man's whole nature to his will and laws<sup>16</sup> are the principal parts of his worship; this righteous harmony should be sustained and restored by sincere repentance for sin and honest amendment of life; since hereafter we will be rewarded or punished according to our deserts.<sup>17</sup> This is the primordial creed of the universal church, a wholly subjective and spiritual affair, which alone is to be called catholic. None can be saved except he profess and live this creed; and such a life is the only necessary manifestation and rite of the worship God requires, and which his perfections naturally elicit from his children.

The five "*veritates catholicae*" are the sole essential elements of true religion, the core of all ethnic religions. All genuine revelation—which in any case is valid only for the individ-

15 Cp. the comment made by Hallam, *Literature of Europe*, (1886 ed.) III, p. 24 on.

16 Lord Herbert never decided upon one or the other of these phrases, hence we may regard them as synonymous. In the 1633 edition he wrote: "*Probam facultatum conformationem ex consensu universali praecipuam partem cultus divini semper habitam fuisse.*" He goes to say that this holy or righteous conformity of our nature results in feelings of gratitude, faith, love, hope, and felicity. But in the 1624 edition, just discovered, the third article is "*Virtutem cum pietate conjunctam optimam esse rationem cultus divini.*" In the French version of 1639, that of 1633 is translated. In the 1645 Latin edition (London), the two phrasings are combined: "*Virtutem cum pietate conjunctam (quae sub proba facultatum conformatione hoc in opere describitur) praecipuam partem cultus divini habitam esse et semper fuisse.*" In defense of this article as a catholic truth, he says, in the 1645 edition: "*De ritibus, ceremoniis, traditionibus sive scriptis sive non scriptis, revelatione . . . minime conventum est; sed de proba conformatione facultatum summus datur ubique consensus.*" Does not the phrase "reverent righteousness express more concisely what he means?

17 Güttler gives the shortest form of the five articles as found in *De Religione Gentilium*, (p. 68): "*Supremum Numen cultus eius jubet, vitae sanctitatem praecipit, poenitentiam scelerum indicit, et praemium vel poenam denunciat.*" The shortest English form of the third article is found in the *Dialogue*, p. 7: "The best worship of Him consists in virtue, piety and charity, conjoined with faith in and love of God."

ual receiving it—must corroborate the catholic truths, or it is not genuine! If it alters them in any way, it may be spurious and certainly is irrelevant. Oracles, doctrines, ceremonies have been contrived by priests in all lands and ages and are classified as possibly true, probably true, or manifestly false—but in any case, the five articles alone are indispensable. Christianity is true and serves salvation only in so far as it accords with and promotes the universal ethical theism of the five catholic verities; as indeed primitive Christianity did, before the hierarchy erected a secondary authority and substituted particular, irrational, unmoral doctrines and rites for the pristine natural revelation in the soul of man.<sup>18</sup>

Such is the body of doctrine for which Lord Herbert's noetic theories furnish an imposing, late Stoic (Chrysippus) facade and narthex. Thus he erected above Rome, Scripture, and Geneva, above Paduan skepticism and Lucretian atheism a catholic certitude impregably founded in the deepest nature of man, an authority more imperious and dogmatic, a way of salvation simpler and more practical, by which one is justified in removing himself out of the range of pulpit and altar and their whole ideology. It likewise transcended all controversies over predestination, justification by faith alone or by faith and works, the infallibility of the Scriptures, the importance of ceremonial public worship according to the Roman or Genevan or Anglican tradition. To cherish a living, reverent faith in the universal Father of mankind; to contemplate and adore his goodness and

18 Lord Herbert's attitude toward Christianity is difficult absolutely to determine. In *De Veritate* he sedulously avoided any direct reference to it. Indeed, I believe it is the first book on religion published in Europe since Boëthius that does not mention Jesus Christ! The 1633 preface adopts the evasion of the two truths: "*praemittere placuit, veritates Intellectus, non Fidei, hoc in opere proponi. Quae igitur ad Fidem attinent, propria luce conspicienda relinquimus; adeo omne novum interea istiusmodi declinamus dogma, ut sola veritatum universalium sustineat Institutum nostrum.*" In *De Religione Laici*, the layman is advised to read his Bible in the light of the five catholic truths; in *De Religione Gentilium*, it is denied that any Mediator can save one from sin and its consequences without sincere repentance and amendment; "saving grace thereto will not be wanting those who do all in their power to be righteous in conduct and reverent in heart and to them Christ will be revealed at the moment of death." (p. 5). A very significant passage in the *Dialogue* will be quoted later. Lord Herbert's favorite text from the Bible seems to have been the dictum of Peter: "In every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." (*Acts* 10:35). Because of intimations about Moses in the *Dialogue*, and the blunt statement that Mahomet was an impostor, "though there are holy precepts for a good life and piety in the Alkoran," I am inclined to believe that Lord Herbert knew the famous *De Tribus Impostoribus* (Moses, Mahomet, Christ), and may have been influenced by it.

perfection; to emulate these attributes in a life of righteousness and forgiveness<sup>19</sup>, repairing its lapses by contrition and reform; to look confidently beyond death to eternal happiness with God—such was Lord Herbert's Catholic Truth. Is there any modern anthropologist who would admit that traces of such a concise, uniform, abstract code of beliefs can be found among archaic peoples? Probably not; but that Lord Herbert made a fairly valid formulation of information furnished by the classic philosophers and historians he knew is incontestable; and how did Maimonides, Vossius, or Selden do better?

A discussion of Lord Herbert's chief historical work, *History of the Reign of Henry VIII*, would be irrelevant in this paper. Hence, I pass it by with the comment that Lord Herbert felt no sympathy for that monarch's personal conduct, and used the religio-political incidents of the story as opportunities to indoctrinate the reader with his own views on Catholic Truth.<sup>20</sup> *De Veritate* remained his favorite work and interest, however, and with minor changes he republished it in London, 1633,<sup>21</sup> providing this edition with a second "Address to the Reader," and contriving to get the *Imprimatur* of William Haywood, Archbishop Laud's domestic chaplain.<sup>22</sup> He is said to have offered it to the papal nuncio for Rome's judgment, a quite consistent yet somewhat artless gesture. Sometime during these years of quiet sojourn at Montgomery Castle and in London he composed his four other works, amplifying and substantiating

19 *Autobiography*, p. 62, three pages of counsel, instancing his own rule, "where, with my honor I could forgive, I never used revenge, leaving it always to God."

20 Sir Thomas More and Lord Bacon were his predecessors in the royal historiography of the Tudors, undertaken to regain royal favor. Lord Herbert uses Parliament's reduction of the sacraments to Baptism and the Eucharist to lament that repentance had not been made a third sacrament (with carefully guarded absolution), for "Baptism and the Lord's Supper are particular rites only in the Christian Church, while penitence is an incontroverted sign of the operation of God's spirit in our hearts, and ought to be acknowledged as a universal sacrament of grace, of the reasonable nature of mankind." (*History*, ed. of 1872, p. 590.)

21 The new preface of the 1633 edition claims that the author exercises free, frank, and disinterested philosophizing: "*Non est igitur a larvato aliquo vel stipendioso Scriptore ut verum consummatum opperiaris . . . ingenuus et sui arbitrii ista solummodo praestabit auctor . . . ut ut liberé quidem philosophemur . . . ut veritatem sine dote queramus.*" In order further to stress his high impartiality, he adds: "*Hoc si impetravero, non erit, ut spero unde haec nostra vel orthodoxis vel quidem heterodoxis displicuisse moreantur, cum non ad controversas excitandas sed solvendas, vel saltem eliminandas editus sit liber hic.*"

22 Laud's chaplain affirmed: "*Nihil reperio bonis moribus aut veritati Fidei contrarium quo minus cum utilitate publica. Imprimatur.*"

his main thesis,<sup>23</sup> presenting it in a simplified, practical way to layman, priest, and student.

The tract to laymen and that to priests were published along with that entitled *De Causis Errorum* in 1645, the very year that the Puritan ritual, a *Directory of Worship*, was published by Parliament, and the Catechism was being debated by the Westminster Assembly. Was the publication intended as an oblique attack upon the sectarian doctrines and ritual alterations endorsed by the Calvinist divines? Or were these tracts, and another Latin edition of *De Veritate* put into print simply because of the author's failing health? In any case, had the theologians of the Assembly or the Puritan zealots in London taken cognizance of the views of their freethinking critic, Lord Herbert, already in financial straits and political peril, might have shared the fate of John Bidle. Indeed, of the two men, Lord Herbert was by far the more dangerous heretic!

Consider, for instance, the tenor of *De Religione Laici*. The author addresses the conscientious person who, a pilgrim through life to eternity, is perplexed to find the right way amid the clamorous sects and their contradictions, most of which declare his reason perverted by sin, and demand a submissive faith. Lord Herbert counsels him to turn to the God of truth, the universal Father, whom natural piety premises, and natural reason affirms; to hold fast the plinthic verities—God, virtue and piety, contrition, immortal hope or apprehension—and thereby appraise all speculations and ceremonies at their true worth. Will any genuine value of religion be lost? Certainly not sanctity of life! Nor need the hierarchy fear for their prestige and revenues, for if they plainly and simply taught the catholic truths, more people would be moved to seek their ministrations. Let the clergy take care not to alienate mankind by disfiguring the divine attributes or by conditioning salvation upon the acceptance of controversial doctrines nor to pretend to any authority beyond that of natural reason, nor to stress and describe too explicitly future penalties for sin. Let the layman beware of founding his faith upon sectarian doctrines, even if apparently taught by Holy Scripture, lest he be deflected from universal truth. Like the author, let him submit all his questionings to the tribunal of the church truly catholic whose tenets are not only infallible, but

<sup>23</sup> *De Causis Errorum una cum tractatu de Religione Laici; Ad Sacerdotes et quibusdam poematibus; De Vita Humana disquisitio. De Vita Coelesti conjectura*, 1645.

alone can maintain civil peace, establish the authority and dignity of the clergy, confirm the austerity of moral discipline and reconcile the Scriptures with the true faith and worship.

Lord Herbert then asks the clergy if it would not be better to found orthodoxy on a rational faith in universal Providence than upon dubious doctrines that plainly dispute it? Is not the denial of a wise and good Providence the only real atheism? Is it possible to discover any doctrine more conducive to piety and virtue than the five catholic truths? Are not the parvenu doctrines of justification by faith and of predestination to blame for religious strife, laxity of morals and the neglect of religion? Are not good and devout actions preferable to troublesome and interminable religious disputes?

*De Causis Errorum*, begun as early as 1633, deals with reason and faith. Reason is man's faculty of knowing the grand primary truths; faith is belief in something particular and secondary. Reason must therefore affirm the five catholic truths which the wise and good God has implanted in man's deepest nature. Moreover, they are attested by the impartial and universal bounties of the outward universe, and it can be demonstrated that they are the primitive nucleus of every particular religion. Then let faith respect and consult them and check its tendency toward delusion at the hands of partisan priests and divines. Thus reason and faith naturally come to agreement, and open a path to religious truth, to which one can never attain through a factitious conflict between faith and reason, provocative of bigoted passions only, and fatal to truth and salvation, holiness of life and social well being.

Lord Herbert wrote these tracts with the greater assurance because *De Religione Gentilium et Errorum apud eos Causis* lay virtually complete before him. It is the capstone of his propaganda in behalf of ethical theism and supplied a want in his teaching he had confessed in the closing chapter of *De Veritate*. Much of his time must have been devoted to a painstaking perusal of classic, patristic, and even contemporary writings in the endeavor to prove that everywhere, always and by all men one supreme God had been explicitly or inferentially acknowledged from the beginning of human history, and that before the invention of rites and divisive doctrines by the priests, piety and virtue were deemed sufficient worship of God and the five catholic verities were firmly held by the wisest and noblest of the heath-

en.<sup>24</sup> Nowhere had Lord Herbert denounced the priests as harshly as in his last book. It ends with the statement that when he had discovered Catholic Truth at the core of all religion, he felt as happy as Archimedes did over the discovery of the principle of leverage. In the same confident tone he submits his discovery to the judgment of the church truly catholic, not to the impious enemies of divine Providence and the public peace. Thus frankly he avowed what he had often hinted, the profound conviction, originating in his early manhood, that God had appointed him to be the repristinator of his universal truth and way of salvation and invisible catholic church, in direct succession to the great moral philosophers of ancient days. Read in the light of this consciousness, the amazing egotism of many passages in his *Autobiography* is to be attributed to the heightened self-consciousness of a prophet and apostle, rather than to petty conceit. This consciousness of a great calling and epochal significance was a common trait in Renaissance men. Did not Calvin and Servetus possess it, as institutors and restitutors of Christianity?

But Lord Herbert's ideas and purposes were esoteric and irenic, rather than iconoclastic; his whole argument makes for an enlightened conformity to existing particular religious institutions rather than for their repudiation. By dint of catholic truth, by the study of moral philosophy, the enlightened can find true inward peace, eternal felicity and peaceful tolerance of religious corruptions, and bow in the house of Rimmon with understanding, good humor and sincerity. Conformity of a discriminating kind—for intellectual aristocrats! The rationale of such an adjustment is the theme of Lord Herbert's most remarkable work, the *Dialogue between a Tutor and his Pupil*. More clearly, more explicitly and in better literary form than in any other of his works, it gives his religious philosophy and its practical bearings. Had it been published during the author's lifetime, or even before 1730, the effect would have been sensational, and references to Lord Herbert by contemporary thinkers would not have been limited to the ten or twelve that can at

24 "Forasmuch as the heathens, as Holy Scriptures testify and learned divines acknowledge worshipped the same God as we do, had the same abhorrence of sin . . . I cannot but think that after they had led a good life they were partakers of the divine grace." From the English version of *De Rel. Gent., The Antient Religion of the Gentiles*, W. Lewis, 1705, p. 7.

present be discovered. But like Bodin's *Colloquy*, it was prudently kept in MS. by the Herbert family.<sup>25</sup>

It begins virtually with Milton's opinion, "whoever takes orders must subscribe himself slave."<sup>26</sup> Theology is noble in its end, but lacks certainty; mathematics has certainty, but its purposes are ignoble; philosophy alone is both certain in its principles and noble in its end! Sectarian partisanship is deprecated, the Pupil is exhorted to be unafraid and free in his search for truth, which is the service of God, the common Father and universal providence. He is reminded of the five catholic verities posited by natural reason and universal consent, and it is explained that these articles of faith do not rest on tradition or authority but are intuitively revealed; that "they dispose men to make their way to God by goodness and virtue and are not such as may form so easy a hope of pardon as they will not fear to sin again."<sup>27</sup> They promote the cause of peace and concord throughout the world and furnish just exercise for one's whole life—"good thoughts, good words, good actions." They can be used as a touchstone to judge all religious doctrines and usages, to see if they be grounded in common reason and the principles of a good life; and they enable one to detect spurious elements and to discriminate between the true, the possible, or the false.

These conclusions having been accepted by the Pupil, the question is broached where, why and by whom was catholic truth adulterated, and Egypt is described as the cradle of idolatry and priestcraft. With artful ambiguity the Tutor suggests the dubiety of Moses' revelations and his regulations of ceremonial worship, as well as the consequences of the possibility of Jesus having lived in Egypt from his twelfth to his thirtieth year. Thus the corruption of pristine natural religion began, through the rapacity and guile of the priests and the gullibility of the people and the manifest imperfection of perfect Goodness in permitting this he evades by observing that "Universal Divine Providence could never leave any country wholly destitute of means to know and serve him, so if not in their religion (which commonly is the invention of their priests), the Gentiles might

25 Not until 1768, four years after Walpole's publication of the *Autobiography*, an immediate success, was the *Dialogue* printed, and then without the authorship stated. But by that time, its skepticism was commonplace.

26 From Bk. II, *The Reason of Church Government*.

27 Lord Herbert had a horror of the moral laxity encouraged by lenient priestly absolution. See John Ruskin's similar views in *Crown of Wild Olives*, "The guilty conscience must cleanse itself."

yet find these means in the laws of their country commanding a good life."<sup>28</sup> The problem of unjust laws, lawyers, and rulers is not grappled with—a striking instance of the spirit of secularism!<sup>29</sup>

Only the philosophers, who were the first interpreters of catholic truth, have remained its faithful guardians and teachers, and it is to that the Pupil is encouraged to resort: "Before religion was invented, there was no worship of God save in a rational way, whereof the philosophers did to this end not only teach virtue and piety but were great examples of it in their lives; whom the people chiefly followed till they gave ear to the covetous and crafty sacerdotal order who, instead of the said virtue and piety, introduced fables and figments of their own coining. Whereupon, praetermitting the doctrines of goodness and piety for the most part, they brought in a religious worship of their own . . . wherefore you will not find it strange, if not only in point of time and precedency, but even of dignity and worth I prefer the philosopher before the priest."<sup>30</sup>

The prudent policy of saying, at least, that the author differentiated between theology and philosophy, which we have already detected in the 1633 edition of *De Veritate*, is developed with astounding audacity and even sarcasm in the *Dialogue*. Any questions of the Pupil relating to contemporary theological issues, such as the infallibility of the Scriptures, are

<sup>28</sup> *Dialogue*, p. 10.

<sup>29</sup> The possibility that the priests themselves might have been innocently deluded, or that the "silly superstition of the people" made rituals and ceremonials and mystagogic oracles, etc., desirable for the inculcation of personal and social morality, is not solved for us by Lord Herbert. Indeed, the aspersions upon priests, guarded and veiled in his earlier works, become unmitigated imputations of sordid villainy in *De Religione Gentilium* and the *Dialogue*. Such phrases as the following are typical: "the heathen priests themselves were the first artificers of false gods" (p. 47); "particular revelations and the offerings of sacrifices are the universal cozenages imposed on mankind" (p. 92); "The cruelty of the priests is shown by their constant reference to the slaughter of the Amalekites, in neglect of the New Testament blessing upon peacemakers" (p. 97). Yet Lord Herbert admits (*Dial.*, p. 28) that their inventions might have something rational and decent in them, implicit or explicit; and (Güttler, p. 63, 68) external ceremonies may have a certain practical value "for the vulgar and ignorant, who live by vivid sensation rather than philosophic reason." But every human being of sound and honest mind is able to understand and fulfill the worship of God in virtue and piety, without external aids of any kind (*De Ver.*, p. 47), though "the most penetrating and discerning men do in some measure submit to the religious worship performed in their time, lest the lewd and debauched following their example and not being able to distinguish truth from false appearances of it, reject all religious worship."

<sup>30</sup> *Dialogue*, p. 42. The whole passage is a capital epitome of Lord Herbert's theory of religious corruption, which is the only typically Deistic element in his system.

answered with ironical deference to the judgment of "our learned divines" in the spirit of Brutus' reference to the conspirators as "honorable men!"<sup>31</sup> Could anything be more suave and astute than the advice: "You do well not to impugn anything that is either probable or possible, since if any difficulty arises, it will be more proper for them to prove their assertions than for you to oppose them!"<sup>32</sup>

So much for the negative aspects of this amazing work of free-thinking ethical theism. Otherwise the appreciation of spiritual Christianity is more marked than elsewhere in Lord Herbert's writings. The Pupil has been led to "the Christian philosophy" by discovering the Golden Rule in a Greek sage, and after *Matthew* 9:13 concludes: "To obey Christ I must, after sin committed, apply myself wholly to repentance and return to a good life, which I consider to consist chiefly in loving God with all my heart and strength and mind and my neighbor as myself."<sup>33</sup> Though Lord Herbert could not accept the Christian ethic of resignation and non-resistance, and being ignorant of modern New Testament criticism, regarded Jesus Christ as considerably involved in ecclesiastical deceptions and errors, we may justly infer from this and other passages that Christ's moral and spiritual teachings seemed to him consonant with "right reason" and identical with God's primordial revelation and catholic truth.

Locke's complaint that Lord Herbert's definition of virtue is too vague for practical, popular use would hardly have been made had the published *Dialogue* been before him. The four cardinal virtues of classical moralists are to be practised with fortitude and discretion, and are amplified by "liberality, munificence and magnanimity, constancy in good resolutions, chastity and modesty, virtuous friendships, verity in word, fidelity in keeping promises, concord and peaceableness."<sup>34</sup> Inner reverence and righteousness, personal moral responsibility, practical godliness in thought, word and deed—these are more than whole burnt offerings, lustrations, censations. Did not Locke himself

31 Cp. the discussion anent the revelation to Isaac to sacrifice his son (p. 78-82), and the responsibility of the theologians for the doctrines of the vicarious, sacrificial atonement, etc.

32 p. 18. These ironical passages are numerous. Cf. p. 84. 97, etc. Milton, we recall, felt much as did Lord Herbert, about covetous and crafty priests: "such as, for their bellies' sakes, creep and intrude and climb into the fold . . . and shove away the worthy bidden guest." (*Lycidas*, 1638).

33 p. 198 on.

34 *Dialogue*, pp. 211-214.

come to the very same conclusion in his *Reasonableness of Christianity?*<sup>35</sup>

Having reviewed the events and aspects of Lord Herbert's personality and religious philosophy, we are prepared to make an appraisal of his place in the thought of his time, and of following centuries.

Ethical theism had been reviving in Europe since Gemisthos Plethon came to Florence in 1439. Its outright advocacy, save as a philosophical propaedeutic of Christianity, was of course impermissible. Montaigne intimated its preferability to ecclesiastical Christianity, Jean Bodin's colloquy hinted its validity and superiority, Charron defined and praised it so enthusiastically that he was accused of disparaging Christianity. *De Veritate* was the first published book forthrightly to expound ethical theism, and its chief originality consisted in the intuitionist authority and certitude with which its noetic theories provided ethical theism, and the concise formulation of its principles in the five articles of catholic truth. It is evident that Lord Herbert regarded himself as the divinely approved reviver and sponsor of the philosophico-religious beliefs of the noblest of the classic sages, which the educated men of Europe had been studying with increasing fervor for a century. But if they adopted them in place of Christianity, or correlated the two systems morally and spiritually, with superior estimation of the former, no public avowal of such infidelity was made, or persisted in, or boldly published. A certain Francesco Puccio is known, who studied in Oxford in the fifteen seventies, returned thither from the continent about 1580, left by compulsion, debated with the Socinians in Basel and Cracow and was finally

35 In this connection it is worthy of note that Richard Baxter, equally hostile to mercenary and crafty priests and prelates, pays Lord Herbert's *De Veritate*, which he criticized more acutely than ever before or since, a high tribute: "I must give the author the credit of his great learning and strength of wit. Secondly, I must confess that the teachers of the church have been too often such as have given him the scandal which he so often expresseth, as more regarding their interest than truth . . . and often wronging it by their omissions or additions or unsound applications. I am so far from writing against his whole book that I take most of his rules and notions in *De Veritate* to be of singular use . . . as he was too low for us, who number not our divine revelations with the verisimilia but with the certain verities, so he was too high for the atheistical sensualists of his age; and I would that they would learn of him that the being and perfections of God, the duty of worshipping Him, and particularly the Ten Commandments, the necessity of true repentance and the rewards and punishments of the life to come with the soul's immortality, are all . . . such natural certainties that the denial of them doth unman them." *More Reasons for the Christian Religion*, pp. 521-2.

burned in Rome because he reduced religious truth to three principles—one God, an upright, rational life, and love for one's neighbor—these only, and not baptism or church attendance being necessary for salvation.<sup>36</sup> But of any lingering influence of Puccio in Oxford we have no record. Nor is there any clear evidence of pure ethical theism among the many cultivated Englishmen devoted to the study of antique moral philosophy.<sup>37</sup> Whatever they thought and privately held, they did not divulge their freethinking to any but their closest friends.

We are forced to conclude that it must have been in France that the young Herbert's allegiance to moral philosophy was stimulated to develop into a system, then into publication, although he tells us that "the book was first begun in England and formed there in all its principal parts, then finished in France, all the spare hours which I could get from my visits and negotiations being employed to perfect this work."<sup>38</sup> But on the occasion of his earliest visit to France (1608), Isaac Casaubon, his host and dear friend in Paris, might well have introduced him to the most eminent thinkers of the day, from whom he could scarcely have failed to hear of the works of Pierre Charron, Montaigne's disciple. *Les Trois Verités and De la Sagesse* contain many views that strikingly resemble those of Lord Herbert. We find in Charron the conception of one universal Providence, of intuitive religious truth formulated in certain innate notions—God, immortality, reward or retribution after death, the natural harmony of right reason and true faith, the colligation of piety and virtue, the priority of devout virtue as a bond with God, the corruption of religion by the priests by myths, rituals, and doctrines, in order to get power and wealth, the folly and wrong of sectarian bigotry and strife.<sup>39</sup> Charron appeals to the same classical sages as does Lord Herbert, and the climate of

36 See W. Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften*, II, p. 253. Also F. Brie, *Deismus und Atheismus in der englischen Renaissance*, Anglia, Bd. 48, pp. 54 on, Halle, 1924.

37 G. T. Buckley, *Atheism in the English Renaissance*, 1932, chaps. 1, 2, 11.

38 *Autobiography*, p. 246.

39 Cp. the translation, *On Wisdom*, by Stanhope, London, 1729, vol. II, p. 721 on, especially the chapter, "The Study of True Piety." Charron also agrees with Lord Herbert that disease may annul or suspend moral responsibility—a later Stoic tenet; but he could not concede to human nature any faculty for the exact distinction between truth and error. See also J. Owen, *Skeptics of the French Renaissance*, 1893, p. 559 on. The best treatise on French freethinking of this period is that of H. Busson, *Les Sources et le développement du Rationalisme dans la littérature française de la Renaissance, 1533-1601*, 1922, p. 456 on.

their works is very similar, save that Lord Herbert is more dogmatic and vehement.

In addition, the latter might have been privileged to read the secretly circulated MSS of the *Colloquium Heptaplomeres* of Jean Bodin, in which religious problems are discussed with perfect frankness by a Roman Catholic, a Lutheran, a Zwinglian or Erasmian, a Mohammedan, a skeptic, a Jew, and a philosopher. Senamus, the skeptic, finds the highest good in the practice of virtue and deems all religions good if they foster it. Toralba, the philosopher, goes by insight as well as by reason, rejects all external authority and all religious ceremonial. True religion, he asserts, is as old as creation, a spark of divinity within us; but it became corrupted by priestcraft and was restored by Pythagoras, Plato, Moses, and Christ. Throughout the work Bodin suggests the need of infallible marks of this primordial ethical theism, though he concedes its validity only for the intellectual elite—ceremonial and ecclesiasticism in general being indispensable for the vulgar masses.<sup>40</sup>

There can be little doubt that Lord Herbert found congenial thinkers in Paris who were hostile to Christianity yet professed ethical theism. We must not fail, however, to recall that when he came to the point of publishing his book, it was first submitted to "Hugo Grotius that great scholar who, being escaped from his prison in the Low Countries came to France and was welcomed by me and M. Tilenus, also one of the greatest scholars of the time who, after they had perused it and given it more commendations that is fit for me to repeat, exhorted me earnestly to print and publish it."<sup>41</sup>

At first sight, such an emphatic endorsement by Hugo Grotius of a book on religion in which Jesus Christ is not even mentioned seems incredible, for at the time Lord Herbert must have consulted him, in the winter of 1634-5, when both were in Paris, Grotius had just published his Dutch poem which was later expanded into the prose Latin work of the same name, *De Veritate Christianae Fidei*. Theologically, Grotius was a latitudinarian Anglican, like Casaubon and other friends of Lord Herbert. How then could he so heartily have approved the publication of so heterodox a book as *De Veritate*? Simply, I

40 See Busson, *op. cit.*, p. 542, for a critique of the *Colloquy*. The best recent account and analysis of this striking work is that by G. H. Sabine, in *Persecution and Liberty*, p. 271 on.

41 *Autobiography*, p. 246.

believe, as an admirable treatise on natural religion, with whose implied critique of ecclesiastical Christianity Grotius felt much sympathy. Both men believed in the natural reason as the divine element in human nature; in the universal benevolence and ethical perfection of the One God; in the vital relation of the practice of such rational virtue to the well-being of the individual and of society. Both men believed that true religion must be rational, and that its principles and duties were worthily taught and lived by the wise and good heathen. Their descriptions of the piety and virtue acceptable to God are alike.<sup>42</sup> God, virtue, immortality, are for both men the core of natural, hence intuitive and universal religion. Both insisted that genuine revelation does not dispute or alter these fundamentals, but must simply corroborate them and make them more explicit and cogent. Together they abhorred the bigotries and inhumanities of war in the name of religion and envisaged the possibility of rendering fanaticism and cynicism both irrational and unrighteous, whatever Rome and Geneva might say, by erecting above their authority a religion and a law of nature, God's first and paramount revelation. The same year, 1624, witnessed, in the same city, the publication of *De Veritate* and of *De Jure Belli et Pacis*.<sup>43</sup> Humane and truth-loving in spirit and motive, generous in vision, rich with classic philosophy and idealism, the two books and their authors call to mind the concluding phrase of Episcopius' great speech at the Synod of Dort; both men were "*amici veritatis*" and wrought in its spirit. Across the Channel another Englishman of renown was submitting himself to the discipline of the moral philosophy that Lord Herbert had embraced in his Oxford years, and from the sages of Greece and Rome imbibing a passion for that moral perfection, that religion of reverent virtue, to which Lord Herbert devoted his later years. Is it not a curious coincidence that in 1634, just a year after the publication of *De Veritate* in London, John Milton closed his *Masque of Comus* with lines that virtually summarize the whole message and spirit of Lord Herbert's ethical theism:

Mortals that would follow me,  
Love virtue; she alone is free;

42 Cp. Book II, sec. 11, and Bk. III, sec. 12 of *De Veritate Christianae Fidei* with Lord Herbert's beliefs.

43 Grotius received the first copies in November. For the underlying philosophy of *De Jure* see Andrew D. White, *Seven Great Statesmen*, p. 78 on, and W. S. M. Knight, *Hugo Grotius*, 1925, p. 101, 167 on. Also, *The Rights of War and Peace*, ed. by A. N. Campbell, 1901, Sec. 45, "True Religion."

She can teach ye how to climb  
 Higher than the sphery chime;  
 Or if virtue feeble were,  
 Heaven itself would stoop to her.<sup>44</sup>

Enough evidence has been brought forward, it is to be hoped, to vindicate the substitution of the title "apostle of ethical theism" for that of "father of English Deism." Lord Herbert's only bond with the Deists was their common repudiation of bigoted mystagogical Christianity. His pietism, moral earnestness, and missionary zeal had no appeal for them in the next century, and apart from Voltaire's obsequious references to "Milord Herbert" whom he had never read but whose title he used to give tone to his Deism<sup>45</sup>, scarcely a Deistic writer of prominence ever refers to him. But Shaftesbury and Anthony Collins knew him and carried on his work; Morgan's *Moral Philosopher* is of his spirit. Franklin read him and affirmed the five catholic verities as the gravamen of his own religion. In the nineteenth century Kantianism and Transcendentalism, as well as the nascent study of ethnic religions, in which he had pioneered, gave his work and views fresh attention and respect.<sup>46</sup> Today we recognize that he should be regarded as the first apostle of ethical theism in Europe since the days of Boëthius—a forthright, frank soldier-scholar at war with falsehood, to whom, in his student days at Oxford, the great minds of the Academy, the Porch, and the Tusculan villa had spoken with such pure, lofty and catholic inspiration that he could thereafter tolerate nothing of sham or meanness or inhumanity in the name of God, and under the guise of religion. Putting by the sword for the pen, he deliberately bent his brilliant gifts to a bookish, recluse existence, in order to proclaim to a strife-torn and faithless era what Emerson, in the same lineage, called the religion of right thinking and right doing.

44 In his *Second Defense*, Milton mentions the fact that "during the interval of uninterrupted leisure which I entirely devoted to the perusal of the Greek and Latin classics, I occasionally visited the metropolis, either for the sake of purchasing new books . . ." Haller edition, 1927, p. 90.

45 N. L. Torrey, *Voltaire and the English Deists*, 1930, pp. 12, 13.

46 Lee's casual classification of Lord Herbert as belonging by affinity with the Cambridge Platonists is absurd. They were officially and expressly Christian. Was it not Nathaniel Culverwel who first and fiercely denounced him in *The Light of Nature* (1652) "as one that hath a powder plot against the Gospel and would compendiously behead our Christian religion at one blow—a device which old and ordinary heretics were never acquainted with."

## THE ORIGIN OF THE GERMAN EVANGELICAL SYNOD OF NORTH AMERICA

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The German Evangelical Synod of North America, now merged with the Reformed Church in the United States under the name of Evangelical-Reformed Church, was founded in the year 1840 as *Der Deutsche Evangelische Kirchenverein des Westens*. It might appear to the casual observer that the establishment of the *Kirchenverein*, like the founding of all immigrant churches, represented purely the transplantation of a foreign culture to the new world where, protected from old-world influences and indifferent to the forces of a strange environment, it would develop its independent forms. The development of this German religious community on the Missouri frontier, however, can not be understood apart from the conditions prevailing in both Europe and America at the time. From the time of its inception it was put to the task of emancipating itself from the ties which bound it to the fatherland and establishing such contacts with the new environment as would constitute it an American body.

The German immigration to the western frontier during the first half of the nineteenth century was occasioned by the peculiar converging of political, economic and religious factors. A fortuitous combination of circumstances lent color and romance to the picture. The economic depression in Germany coincided with years of plenty in America; the politically oppressed were inspired by the prospects of American democracy; the gloom of ecclesiastical tyranny was brightened by the promise of religious freedom in the new world. It was a unique situation.

A large number of the German emigrants of the early part of the nineteenth century belonged to the peasant class. The post-Napoleonic period groaned under oppressive taxation. A series of crop failures, interspersed with terrifically cold winters, wrought untold misery. The attractions of the new world, on

the other hand, were most alluring. The eyes of America were turned toward the West. Home markets in the East were on the decline. The specter of soil-depletion had aroused misgivings on the part of the younger generation concerning the continued prosperity of the East. Escape was found in the unlimited resources of the unclaimed fertile valleys of the West. The news of the American boom spread to Germany where more books were being written about America than about any other country in the world. Above all, the lower classes were wonder-struck by fabulous stories of the actual availability of land, of the phenomenal rise of new communities in the West and exceedingly low taxes. Thus the illiterate and uncultured German peasant was found in the front ranks of the immigration of this period.

Nineteenth century Germany was also the home of a highly educated and cultured class from whom the political liberal, destined to play an important part in the development of German life in the West, was largely recruited. General disaffection had been inflamed by the ecclesiastical paternalism of the government. The consistorial régime of the subsidized clergy, or *Pfaffen*, as they were contemptuously called, was roundly condemned. The liberal movement which followed the monarchical reaction after the Napoleonic wars was centered at the German universities in the so-called *Burschenschaften* movement. The machinations of Metternich, however, and the absolute-monarchical spirit of Prussia shattered the dream of the nationalists and the hopes of the young republicans. A series of intense persecutions turned many wistful eyes to America and many a German heart responded to Lenau's exultant song:

Oh thou new world, and Freedom's world  
Against whose fertile, flowery strand  
Thy tyrant's wrath in vain is hurled,  
In thee I greet my Fatherland.<sup>1</sup>

Although a general mass emigration did not occur until after the Revolution of 1830, a few notable individuals, such as Gottfried Duden,<sup>2</sup> Louis Eversmann and Karl Follen in 1824, and Francis Lieber in 1827, had previously directed attention

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by J. G. Legge, *Rhyme and Revolution*, London, 1918, p. 131.

<sup>2</sup> The unrivalled popularity of Missouri among the German immigrants of this period was due to Duden who, during the years 1824-27, located in Warren County, Missouri, and attractively described his experiences in his *Bericht über eine Reise nach den westlichen Staaten Nord Amerikas und über einen mehrjährigen Aufenthalt am Missouri* . . . Elberfeld, 1829.

to the new world. The immigrants of 1832, the so called "thirty-twoers," were warmly welcomed. A group of ten thousand arrived in that year. The total number for the decade was 152,000—not all of whom, however, were political refugees. From 1830 to 1845 the average annual emigration rose to about forty thousand.<sup>3</sup> And why should not America, the land of the free, with its much vaunted *Sternenbanner*, the home of Washington, of Jefferson, and now of Jackson, become the haven for these oppressed?

Opposition to the church had been nurtured by the rationalists who rejected both the formalistic orthodoxy of the hard minded Lutherans and the obscurantism of the naïve Pietist. When the state sought to suppress this free spirit, political and theological liberals turned to the new world for relief. America alone offered escape from the ecclesiastical tyranny and the religious obscurantism of the conservative state-church. In this free country every one could openly believe or disbelieve anything he desired.

The counterpart of the rationalist was the Pietist. The seventeenth century Pietism of Philipp Spener, August Francke and Nicolaus Zinzendorf was strongly ascetic and emotional at times to the point of fanaticism. In opposition to the rising tide of rationalism in the nineteenth century the movement had experienced a rebirth throughout Germany. Under the leadership of Professors Johann Neander at Berlin, Friedrich Tholuck and Heinrich Guericke at Halle, and Johann Beck at Basel (later at Tübingen), a biblical and experiential theology had developed, dignified by scholarly polemic against the tirades of current rationalism. Due to the influence of Johann Bengel, the Spener of the eighteenth century, Württemberg became the real home of German Pietism. Under the aegis of Pietism, to stem the tide of rationalism, numerous interconfessional Christian, Bible, missionary and tract societies originated throughout Germany, the most noteworthy being the *Christentums Gesellschaft*, founded by Johann Urlsperger, a devoted follower of Bengel.

A direct product of this development was the founding, in 1815, of the *Evangelische Missions Gesellschaft zu Basel* which, with pietistic fervor, began opposing the narrow confessional

3 Löhner evidently used census statistics in his estimate that the number of emigrants from 1831 to 1860 averaged 50,000 a year, reached the annual number of 100,000 after 1849 and amounted to 143,000 in 1853. The total from 1815 to 1860 amounted to 2,500,000. *Vide* Franz Löhner, *Geschichte der Deutschen in Amerika*, Göttingen, 1855, p. 253.

distinctions of the day. The unionism of Basel was not of the ecclesiastical, bureaucratic, Prussian type but rather, as Inspector Christian Blumhardt expressed it, based on the apostolic method of missions which did not recognize the distinction between Lutherans and Reformed. Similar to the Basel institution and also a product of the pietistic Urlsperger movement was the *Rheinische Missions Gesellschaft* (1828), with its center at Barmen.

These various political, cultural and religious distinctions were furthermore complicated by intersecting denominational groupings. Protestant Germany was divided against itself by numerous rival creeds and competing liturgical orders. In some places Lutheran and Reformed congregations shared the use of the same church, each having its own form of worship, yet each violently antagonistic to the other. Gradually, however, the desire for a union of the opposing groups began to manifest itself. The sense of national solidarity had been quickened by the French wars from which the new Prussian state had emerged. Both Lutheran and Reformed branches were opposed to the rationalists. The spirit of the Enlightenment had depreciated the significance of dogmatic formulas. Pietism, always more vital in Reformed than in Lutheran communities, had begun to temper denominational distinctions. Indeed, for three decades the question of union had been variously discussed, having been espoused especially by such men as Schleiermacher.

The union project could be approached from the viewpoint of doctrine, polity, or liturgy. King Friedrich Wilhelm III (1797-1840) favored the latter approach and, after extended liturgical studies, proposed an order of worship (1816) to be used first in the garrison and court-church but designed ultimately for use in all the churches of the realm. The approaching tercentenary anniversary of the Reformation in October, 1817, was chosen as the proper occasion to promulgate the union and on September 27, the king, in a court proclamation, called upon the German Protestants of Prussia—Lutherans and Reformed—to unite in a communion service according to the new rite.

Thus the Evangelical church, the church of the Prussian Union, came into existence, marking an epoch in the history of German Protestantism.<sup>4</sup> Doctrinal equations were to be avoid-

<sup>4</sup> Erich Foerster, *Die Entstehung der Preussischen Landeskirche*, Tübingen, 1905.

ed. Lutherans were not to become Reformed nor were the Reformed to become Lutherans but, united in essentials on the basis of Eph. 4:4-6, they were now to become "Evangelical." The union was widely hailed by the populace and spread to other provinces where the decision to accept or reject was frequently referred to the local congregations. Greatest success attended the movement in the West, especially in the region along the Rhine in Westphalia, Baden, Nassau and in both Hesses.

Most of the churches, however, did not accept the new order. Vigorous opposition immediately emanated from Klaus Harms, the vehement pastor in Kiel who, in his *Ninety-five Theses* of 1817, tiraded equally against rationalism and unionism. Indeed, although the Evangelicals as well as the Reformed and Lutherans opposed the prevailing rationalistic propaganda, the most militant opponents of the union were the Old Lutherans who inaugurated an exclusive confessionalistic tradition which has continued to the present time. The strict Lutherans finally rallied to the support of the pious Lutheran preacher and professor, Johann Scheibel, of the University of Breslau, who became the leader of the anti-union party.

The Prussian government sought to suppress not only the separatistic Lutherans but, as early as 1825, published a decree against the "subjectivistic, mystic, Pietistic movement" and its "*dumfe trübe und ängstigende Lebensansicht*"—a position which was shared by some other German states. The orthodox of all branches united in the attack upon the rationalists and urged their dismissal from the church.

Thus the beginning of the nineteenth century in Germany witnessed a three-cornered controversy between the rationalists, Pietists and orthodox Lutherans which became more complicated when the orthodox joined the Pietists in their opposition to the rationalists, and became even more involved when, under the auspices of the state, the Lutheran and Reformed branches were united into the Evangelical church. The emigrants who came to America during these and later years—peasants, scholars, patriots, students, orthodox, liberals, Reformed, Lutheran, Evangelicals, Pietists and rationalists—brought with them memories of the animosities of the old world which all too often were perpetuated in the new.

Arriving in America, the German immigrants were caught in the midst of that great western migration designated by

Channing as "one of the marvelous phenomena of history." Unusually large numbers settled in Missouri. The economic resources of this state had begun to attract national attention.<sup>5</sup> Missouri was rapidly being recognized as the key state for the occupation of the Great Valley and the attention of German immigrants inevitably turned in this direction.

How did religion fare in the German settlement of the West? A variety of types, ranging from sentimental Pietists to abandoned infidels, congregated on the frontier. It would not be correct to maintain that only the educated, university-trained Germans were anti-religious and that the indigent peasant groups were spiritually-minded. Although the least influential cultural factor was the pietist-peasant and the common laborer their ranks were frequently penetrated by rationalistic propagandists and impostors who stirred up antagonism to orthodox religion.

The responsibility, however, for fixing the odium of materialism and atheism upon German groups lay with the educated, rationalistic Germans<sup>6</sup> who were generally dominated by radically anti-ecclesiastical sentiments. Obsessed by memories of German consistories and synods, they loudly rejected all forms of organized religion and with a single gesture banned all preachers as despicable *Pfaffen*, whose one aim was to fleece their innocent victims and impose on them the bondage of ecclesiasticism. Religion was held to be strictly a personal matter and ecclesiastical institutions and synods were therefore dangerous and undesirable. Similarly all pietistic forms of religion were ruthlessly opposed.

The liberal German also opposed the religion of the newly arrived Easterner from "over the mountains" who brought with him the abominations of Puritanism—temperance, prohibitionism, Sabbatarianism, etc. All this he denounced as Yankee or American hypocrisy designed to deprive him of his God-given liberty. The German in turn was roundly condemned for his *Sabbathschänderei* when on Sunday he visited the parks and

5 In the year 1818 this "territory was settling as fast as any other was settled" and in 1819 we are told that "the emigration to Missouri is so great as to furnish a home market . . ." *Niles' Register*, May 16, 1818; Jan. 1819.

6 The mouthpiece of political and religious liberalism, and the outstanding representative of enlightened German thought in the Middle West for decades to come was the *Anzeiger des Westens*, founded in 1835 by Herr von Festen and Christian Bimpage.

places of amusement, took an excursion into the country or spent his time in target-shooting or bowling.

The religious destitution of German communities manifested itself in various ways. At some places the school teacher was considered more important than the preacher and provided the necessary religious services. Frequently German settlements were the victims of roving independent preachers with a very liberal theology and still more liberal moral standards.<sup>7</sup> Some of them were theologically trained. Many of them were not ordained. In some communities these free-lance preachers found easy entrance. In cultured Latin-farmer settlements it was possible for a brilliant, free-thinking preacher to pose as the *Herr Pastor*, to minister to a congregation in the name of Freedom, Equality, and Brotherhood and baptize the children of the community in the name of this trinity. Under the leadership of such rationalistic preachers, the so-called independent, free churches sprang into existence—the plague of devout pastors for decades to come.

At times groups of pious Germans without the guidance of a pastor would organize a church. Meetings would be conducted in the home of some farmer at which a sermon and prayer would be read by the leader of the group. If the organization flourished, steps would be taken to secure a pastor. In some instances a church was built before a pastor was secured.

German communities on the whole, however, were without churches or pastors and reports of itinerant preachers from the East and German travellers alike testified to their spiritual plight. There was an evident distrust of the American preacher who offered his services, and little appreciation for his unprofessional status.<sup>8</sup>

How, then, could the religious needs of German communities in the West be met? It was a foregone conclusion that the most effective succor must come from German sources either in America or Europe. From the time of Heinrich M. Mühlenthal, the father of American Lutheranism, the German Lutherans of the homeland had manifested live interest in the spiritual welfare of their American brethren. Likewise the German

<sup>7</sup> The operations of such an impostor are described by Johann Büttner, *Die Vereinigten Staaten von Nord Amerika—Mein Aufenthalt und meine Reisen in denselben vom Jahre 1834-1841*, Hamburg, 1844, I, pp. 148-152.

<sup>8</sup> W. G. Bek, "Followers of Duden," *Missouri Historical Review*, XV (1921), 534.

and Dutch Reformed churches on the continent had generously come to the support of the German Reformed colonial settlers. A similar interest was now manifested by the non-confessional and pietistic missionary societies of Basel and Barmen.

Although the original interest of Basel lay in foreign missions, there gradually developed the policy of assisting the German "colonists" in the new world. Early in 1835 the German-Swiss colony at Neu Aargau (Centerville), Illinois, approached the Basel committee for a "devout pastor to preach the simple gospel." Johann J. Riess was delegated to this difficult field.<sup>9</sup> The sending of Riess to Illinois helped to formulate Basel's American policy. Although it seemed contrary to the primary purpose of the society to assume obligations for the American field, Basel was inclined to accept the American challenge since it would always have at its disposal missionaries who, because of ill health or language difficulties, were not fitted for foreign service.

Nor was the Basel committee mistaken in assuming that additional pleas for assistance would arrive. By the year 1840 pietistic, unionistic Basel had developed a warm interest in the American field—having by that time stationed Friedrich Schmid at Ann Arbor, Michigan; Martin Schaad at Detroit, Michigan; G. W. Metzger at Liverpool, Ohio; Johannes Gerber at Madison, Indiana; J. J. Riess at Centerville, Illinois (now Millstadt); George W. Wall at St. Louis, Missouri; and Joseph Rieger at Alton, Illinois. The latter four became charter members of the *Kirchenverein*.

The work of the Barmen Mission Institute among the Germans in America originated in the plan of Barmen to establish a mission among the American Indians, where Germans occupying adjacent territories could also be served. Barmen definitely distinguished between these two missionary projects. Pursuant to these plans, Philipp Heyer and Tilman Niess landed at New York in July, 1836. They arrived in St. Louis in November, at practically the same time that Wall and Rieger put in their appearance. Prevented from going farther by the ill health of Niess and the approaching winter, they proceeded to minister to the needs of the German colony at St. Charles, Missouri. Heyer deserted the Barmen Society and became pastor of an Evangel-

<sup>9</sup> *Magazin für die neueste Geschichte der protestantischen Missions und Bibelgesellschaft*, Basel, XX (1835), 396; XXI (1836), 429. *Diary of J. J. Riess*, 1834-1850, (MS).

ical church (*Friedens*), located about two and one-half miles southwest of St. Charles. Informed of the defection of Heyer, Barmen sent a substitute in the person of Eduard Nollau to proceed with Niess to the Flathead Indians in Oregon. In September, Niess died, whereupon Barmen abandoned the Indian mission project. Nollau accordingly established himself among the Germans at Gravois Settlement, Missouri, twelve miles south of St. Louis. Both Nollau and Heyer helped organize the *Kirchenverein* in 1840.

Not connected with any society, and arriving in Missouri prior to those mentioned above, was Hermann Garlichs—another charter member of the *Kirchenverein*. With a group of Westphalians, Garlichs emigrated during the revolutionary upheavals of the thirties and settled on the Femme Osage Creek thirty miles west of St. Charles (1833). Here he built the first Evangelical parsonage in the West and founded the two oldest Evangelical churches in Missouri, known today as the Evangelical Church at Femme Osage and the *Friedens* Church near St. Charles.<sup>10</sup>

However, in the midst of the social, cultural and religious developments among the Germans in the West, the ecclesiastical establishment of religion had not proceeded much beyond the founding of a few small congregations usually located in the most densely populated German communities. German churches prior to 1840, and for a long time thereafter, fought shy of denominational affiliations. And yet, the time was at hand when the forces of orthodox religion needed to organize in order to sustain themselves. To meet the spiritual needs of the day, the Evangelical pastors of the West banded themselves together in the *Kirchenverein des Westens*—the first German religious church-body west of the Mississippi.

With growing interest and rising hopes the Lutheran and Reformed churches of the East viewed the religious stirrings among the Germans in the West. A union of the western Germans with already existing denominational organizations of the East seemed to be the next logical step. This, however, was not to be. The undisguised reluctance of western Germans to merge their fortunes with the German denominations in the East may be accounted for in various ways. The tension between eastern

<sup>10</sup> *Erinnerung an den Ehrwürdigen Hermann Garlichs* (edited by ministers of the First Conference of the Lutheran Ministerium of New York, N. Y., 1865). Bek, "Followers of Duden," *M. H. E.* XVIII (1923), 36.

and western churches was rooted in fundamental differences. The peculiar problems agitating the West no longer concerned the East. Both Reformed and Lutheran synods of the East had made notable concessions on the language question. The synodical minutes of both bodies had long since been printed in the English language, which is strongly indicative of the rise of an American-born clergy. In the West, on the other hand, a fresh German immigration emphasized anew certain racial characteristics which widened the chasm between German and English speaking churches.

Even if the pastors were willing to cooperate with existing organizations in the East, their church constituency, on the whole, was opposed to an organic relation with American-German "synods" and was content to work out its problems in the sectional smugness of the West. A large number of the western Germans had come from the unionistic provinces of Prussia, Bavaria, Kur-Hesse, Baden, and Nassau. Indeed, most of the western settlers had been members of the Evangelical church in Germany and were, therefore, not attracted by the overtures of the Lutherans and the Reformed of the East.

The liberal American-Germans of the East were forced to admit, sometimes grudgingly, the expediency of permitting the newcomers to organize Evangelical congregations. Such a policy was espoused by F. A. Rauch, principal of the "Classical School" at York, Pennsylvania (Reformed), who objected to sending both Lutheran and Reformed preachers into the new territory to perpetuate the old-world division when Evangelical ministers were able to supply all needs.<sup>11</sup> It was also quite obvious that the Evangelicals were too numerous to be absorbed by a Lutheranism which was divided against itself. Although Samuel S. Schmucker suggested that the German churches of the West should organize as independent Evangelical churches "on the principles of our Congregational brethren of New England," he also espoused the idea that the pastors of such churches might consociate with their brethren of the Lutheran or Reformed denominations.<sup>12</sup>

Although both the Lutheran and Reformed churches of the East joined hands with the American Home Missionary Society in aiding the Germans in the West, it soon became apparent that

<sup>11</sup> Rauch contributed a series of eight articles on "German Characteristics" to the *Home Missionary*, VIII (1835), 135 to IX (1836).

<sup>12</sup> *Home Missionary*, IX (1836), 36; VIII (1836), 209.

the solution for the western problem could not be found in this way. Since the European-Germans of the West were being served increasingly by non-confessional pastors from Basel and Barmen, closer relations with eastern bodies became less attractive. The physical isolation of the frontier also drew the German pastors together and suggested the need of founding a fraternal organization. It also became increasingly evident that the German Evangelical forces in the West must unite against the rising tide of rationalism—an opposition which at times bordered on physical violence. Also bearing directly on the founding of the *Kirchenverein* were the Saxon Lutherans who, since their arrival in 1839, had developed an antagonistic attitude toward the unionistic groups in St. Louis and vicinity. Wall of St. Louis was the first of the Evangelical pastors to be confronted by what he referred to as the "papal Protestant Stephanists who consider it a sin to serve a united church since according to their opinion the Reformed are the children of Satan . . . ."

With all these factors operating together, the time arrived to consolidate the efforts of the Evangelical pastors scattered throughout the regions of Missouri, Illinois, and Indiana. And thus, utterly independent of any ecclesiastical connections in Europe or in America, the *Kirchenverein des Westens* came into existence—the indigenous product of the socio-religious conditions prevailing in the West.

Under date of September 28, 1840, Nollau, of Gravois Settlement, Missouri, dispatched the following letter to a selected number of German ministers in the West.

Dear Colleague:

For some time a number of German Evangelical brethren who are in charge of United Evangelical congregations, have felt in their solitude and isolation the need of fellowship and fraternal cooperation. This feeling has become stronger of late on account of opposition of the English Lutheran Synods, and for those living in the neighborhood of St. Louis of the Ultra-Lutherans.

In order to establish and foster such fellowship, we purpose, if God wills, to hold a fraternal gathering on Wednesday, October 14, 1840, in Gravois Settlement. It is not intended at this time that this meeting shall be a gathering of a "synod," but for the time being it shall merely afford an opportunity to become mutually acquainted. Some important matters will be deliberated upon, and a covenant of fraternal fellowship will be made.

The venerable Reverend Mr. Wall of St. Louis joins me in the cordial and fraternal wish that you honor us on that day with your pres-

ence. Should this, however, be impossible, we request you to send us in writing, on or before the said date, your proposals and wishes concerning a closer alliance of the Evangelical clergy.

How many invitations were extended is not known. Five pastors responded—Garlichs of Femme Osage, Heyer of St. Charles, Wall of St. Louis, Riess of Centerville, and Karl Daubert of Quincy, Illinois.<sup>13</sup> All were of Evangelical background except Daubert who, in 1839, had been sent to the West by the Ohio Synod of the Reformed Church.

The deliberations began on the morning of October 15, in the hall which separated the two rooms of the log-cabin parsonage at Gravois. The protocol of the meeting begins with this statement:

Recognizing the importance of their calling and fully aware of the responsibility resting upon them, cognizant of their weakness and unworthiness but trusting in the power and assistance of the Lord, they first knelt before Him with the prayer that for His name's sake he would guide them aright in their deliberations and fill them with wisdom and abundant grace and blessing.

Daubert was elected president and Nollau secretary. The twenty-four resolutions adopted covered a wide range of subjects. It was unanimously decided not to organize a synod at this time. The heavily charged anti-synodical atmosphere prevented such a step. It was decided, however, after a lengthy discussion, that those present constitute themselves *Der Deutsche Evangelische Kirchenverein des Westens*—a studied effort being made to avoid the bureaucratic features traditionally associated with synodical bodies. Thus the denomination later known as the Evangelical Synod came into existence as a pastoral conference consisting of eight members.

The confessional statement consisted of only sixteen words. Any uncertainty as to the meaning of the term "Evangelical" was removed by the simple subscription to the symbolic writings of "our Evangelical mother church in Germany . . ."<sup>14</sup> To meet the needs of religious education, the problem of procuring

13 J. Gerber, presumably located at Madison, Indiana, at the time, begged to be excused "on account of business." J. Rieger at the time of the meeting was returning from Germany with his bride. Desiring to be charter members of the society, both later affixed their signatures to the protocol of 1840.

14 In the following year (1841) subscription to the symbolic books was made secondary to the acknowledgement of the Old and New Testaments as the sole criterion of faith, in the exposition of which the consensus of the symbolic books of the Lutheran and the Reformed churches was considered normative. In 1848 the symbolic books are specifically mentioned as being "mainly" the Augsburg Confession, and the Lutheran and the Heidelberg Catechisms.

a catechism was also considered and a committee composed of Wall, Garlichs, and Nollau was requested to prepare a draft. Although the use of vestments in public services was not made obligatory, the members of the society, in the performance of their official duties, were encouraged to appear in the vestments used in the "Evangelical mother-church." It was agreed that the unique conditions prevailing in the West required radical changes in forms of worship. A committee, consisting of Daubert, Riess, and Nollau was therefore appointed to present a prospectus of a Book of Worship at the next meeting of the society.

This mixture of formal, constitutional clauses with routine business provisions constituted a basic declaration of principles which guided the subsequent development. The so-called "fundamental articles," which pertained to the creedal position, having been accepted and declared unchangeable except by a two-thirds majority vote, the secretary was instructed to present a copy of the proceedings to other ministers who might be interested and might thereby be induced to join. Nollau was instructed to invite a number of such ministers to attend the next meeting which was to be held at St. Charles, Missouri, the following year.

Thus, in the untrammelled freedom of the far West, on the unrestricted expanse of the western frontier, where new interpretations of American freedom were constantly arising, there emerged an entirely new and independent German church—a unique sociological development in the history of American religious life. No sooner, however, did it raise its feeble voice than a wave of opposition threatened to crush its life.

The founding of the *Kirchenverein* created a veritable sensation in the ranks of the rationalists. The principles for which they had fought in Germany, and in the quest of which they had come to America, seemed to be threatened anew. They had successfully repelled the threatened invasion of the Pennsylvania synods only to find that on their own soil a similar organization was beginning to raise its head. And yet, in spite of all the opposition and antagonism directed against the infant organization, it successfully withstood the storms which hovered about it.

A profound conviction dominated the European-Germans of the West that the future belonged to them and must be fashioned according to the specific needs arising in their midst, apart

from any relations with existing ecclesiastical bodies in the East. Indeed, it had become sufficiently clear that Americanized Lutheranism of the East, with its elaborate synodical organization, would not appeal to the freedom-seeking Germans newly arrived from the fatherland—most of whom seemed to favor the Evangelical position. Furthermore, as the West was in the throes of frontier problems which the East had long since overcome, it became increasingly clear that the ultimate success of any western body depended on its ability to meet the needs peculiar to the West. Indeed, in conjunction with the Saxon Lutherans, representing another wave of European-Germans, the *Kirchenverein* for years to come was destined to hold the field in Missouri against the encroachments of the German church bodies of the East.

In the process of such an adjustment both the *Kirchenverein* and the Saxon Lutherans were exposed to the danger of sectional sectarianism. This was less of a danger for the *Kirchenverein* which, in principle and practice, was committed to fraternal and irenic relations with other Protestant bodies. Thus it grew stronger in numbers and in 1866 adopted the name German Evangelical Synod of the West. In 1877, no longer restricted to the West, the name was changed to German Evangelical Synod of North America, and in 1925 the final step in the Americanization process occurred when the word "German" was dropped and the Evangelical Synod of North America appeared upon the scene. Finally in 1934 occurred the union of the Evangelical Synod and the Reformed Church in the United States from which arose a new denomination—the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

## ROBERT J. BRECKINRIDGE AND THE SLAVERY ASPECT OF THE PRESBYTERIAN SCHISM OF 1837

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The stories of the great Methodist and Baptist slavery schisms have found a place in the general histories of the United States. That there was, also, a major schism in the decade of the thirties in the Presbyterian church is fairly well known, yet few students of American history have demonstrated much discriminating knowledge of the two large bodies of Presbyterians that existed for thirty years after, and as the result of this schism. The great cleavage in the Presbyterian church, known as the Old School-New School schism, has been presented as the result of a struggle which was concerned almost exclusively with doctrine and ecclesiastical government. The struggle was, to a large degree, of a theological nature. Opposition to the New England influence, operating through the once popular Plan of Union, goes far to account for the fury with which Robert J. Breckinridge and others who represented the Scotch-Irish element in the church battled against more liberal tendencies. The upshot of the fight, the "cutting off" of two-fifths of the church in 1837-38, need not be recounted here.<sup>1</sup>

The great importance of the theological and ecclesiastical controversy should not be allowed to obscure the fact that the slavery issue had its part in the schism. The history of the denomination during the first half of the nineteenth century requires further and broader study before a satisfactory picture of the full rôle which slavery played in this division can be drawn. The material at hand, which grew out of a study of Robert J. Breckinridge, the leader perhaps most immediately responsible for the schism of 1837, is presented here as a small

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<sup>1</sup> See R. E. Thompson, *A History of the Presbyterian Churches in the United States*, chs. X, XI.

part of the total evidence which should be assembled on this subject.<sup>2</sup>

Robert J. Breckinridge was the scion of an illustrious tradition and of a family which numbered

Senators, Representatives . . . Judges, Lawyers, Colonels, Governors, Foreign Ministers and Preachers. . .<sup>3</sup>

To this list might have been added that of Attorney General, an office held under Jefferson by Robert's own father, John Breckinridge. Robert's mother was a strong-minded woman and a devout Christian. Three of her sons, William, John, and Robert had grown to manhood in years when Kentucky was the center of almost continuous religious revivals, and all three became Presbyterian clergymen. William was a leader of the orthodox in Kentucky, where he published for a time a periodical, a large share of whose columns were used to support the policies championed by his bolder brother Robert. John, a figure of rare charm, endowed with more human charity and sweetness than Robert, was no less devoted to orthodoxy. His short career reached a high point in his notable debates with Bishop John Hughes on the relative merits of Presbyterianism and Catholicism in a democratic state.

In 1834, when Robert Breckinridge burst forth, rather than emerged, as the parliamentary leader of the Old School forces in the Presbyterian church, he had left behind him a promising, if short, secular career. Educated at Yale and Union, Breckinridge had been trained for the law. Elected to the Kentucky House of Representatives by a Blue Grass district he served during a period in which the state was rocked almost to the point of civil war by the "Court Struggle." In this contest between the champions of the masses and the defenders of the rights of property it is significant that Breckinridge championed the conservative cause. Re-election to the House in 1828 was followed by an almost fatal sickness, a condition which gave his brother, John, an opportunity to renew ardent pleas for Robert's salvation and dedication to the church. With earnestness John sought to save and redirect his brother's life:

2 This article draws in considerable part from a chapter of "The Earlier Life of Robert J. Breckinridge, 1800-1845," the writer's doctoral dissertation in the Department of History, University of Chicago, 1932.

3 O. Brown to Breckinridge, Dec. 24, 1824. Breckinridge MSS., in Library of Congress.

You are no half-way-man in anything. It is not your nature to be a driveller; a milk and water man—or Christian—you will not be a bold politician . . . a clear and admired lawyer . . .<sup>4</sup>

Though Breckinridge's conversion followed soon after, he did not at once forsake his political ambitions. His new interest in moral and religious questions is clearly reflected, however, in the platform on which he offered himself in 1830, when he last ran for re-election to the Kentucky House. He demanded stricter laws to regulate the "Sunday Mails." More pertinent to this study was the great zeal he then showed for the emancipation and the colonization of the slaves.

It seems to have been more than a mere coincidence that Breckinridge made his first important public anti-slavery stand very soon after his conversion. As an evidence of his sincerity he acted to free his own slaves.<sup>5</sup> He contributed to the press a series of anti-slavery articles entitled "Hints on Slavery." Since both Breckinridge and the slavery problem were about to intrude or assert themselves in Presbyterian councils, the high ground which the brilliant young leader occupied in 1830 with respect to slavery warrants attention. His discussion of the issue is surcharged with a broad democratic and idealistic spirit. The attack on slavery is supported by both philosophical and religious arguments. "Slavery," Breckinridge declared, "is at war with the principles of every species of social system." He was sure that, of the half million white Kentuckians, not four hundred had an interest in maintaining the institution. From this estimate he drew a conclusion that strikes a distinctly modern note:

In a free government, so small a minority should be very cautious in trusting to their own impartiality and justice, in a case where they consider their property involved, when the great mass of their fellow men

<sup>4</sup> John Breckinridge to Robert J. Breckinridge, Mar. 31, 1829.

<sup>5</sup> In 1833 ninety-six blacks were sent from Kentucky to Liberia by the Colonization Society; of these, eleven were slaves freed by Breckinridge. Together with this gift Breckinridge furnished "considerable money and supplies for their maintenance after their arrival in Africa." Martin, Asa E., *The Anti-slavery Movement in Kentucky Prior to 1850*; Louisville, 1917, 59. Yet it appears that in the next year he owned slaves not provided for in any schema of future emancipation, and a minister suggested that his words would gain force if he would follow his brother William's example in freeing his slaves. (Steel to R. J. B., Dec. 25, 1834.) Whatever the exact status of all his slaves in 1834, an Emancipation Deed indicates that early in 1835 Breckinridge provided that his mature slaves should all be free within a few years and the younger ones upon attaining the age of twenty-five. (Copy of the Emancipation Deed, dated Jan. 13, 1835.) His motive was stated to be "an earnest desire to obey the gospel of God and add to the happiness of all mankind . . ."

differ from them in their views of the welfare and grandeur of the Commonwealth.<sup>6</sup>

To this challenge to a great property interest Breckinridge called to his support the precepts both of religion and of the Declaration of Independence:

You may take man at his birth, and by an adequate system make him a slave—a brute—a demon. This is man's work. The light of reason, history and philosophy—the voice of nature and religion—the spirit of God himself proclaims that the being he created in his own image he must have created free.<sup>7</sup>

Though some points in the "Hints" intimated the possibility of radical action it is not surprising that it was the plan of gradualism, colonization, that enlisted the support of the young border state politician. One aspect of colonization had a peculiar hold on Breckinridge's newly quickened religious nature:

As a grand missionary operation, it commends itself in a peculiar manner to the Christian community, who fail not to discover in it the hand of that presiding Providence, which, having permitted the wretched African to be enslaved and christianized, now demands his restoration that he may christianize his brethren.<sup>8</sup>

In the early thirties Breckinridge made great forward strides in the church. Though his defeat for re-election to the Kentucky House was in no sense the direct cause of his entrance into the ministry, it did, at least, facilitate the transition to the profession of his brothers. After a few months at Princeton Seminary and but three years' service in a Baltimore pastorate, his name was known widely in church circles. A continuous campaign against the Catholics, in the "Seat of the Beast," did not prevent him from taking a leading rôle in the theological battle against the New School. In 1834, by his authorship of the famous "*Act and Testimony*"—dubbed by its enemies the "The Test Act"—Breckinridge became the acknowledged leader, in action if not in profundity of theological thinking, in the Old School camp.

The ecclesiastical and theological controversy needs no re-statement here, but the position of the church on slavery, prior to 1873, may need brief review. Like those of other denominations, the early declarations of the Presbyterians reflect fairly well the prevailing revolutionary and humanitarian philosophy

<sup>6</sup> *Kentucky Reporter*, May 5, 1830.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, May 19, 1830.

<sup>8</sup> *Kentucky Reporter*, May 14, 1830. See Breckinridge's *Address Before the Colonization Society of Kentucky* (Jan., 1831) for a fuller statement of his colonization ideas.

of the Jeffersonian era. The pronouncement which became the focal point of later discussion was the Declaration of 1818. In this document the Presbyterian General Assembly denounced slavery as "inconsistent with the law of God, and totally irreconcilable with the gospel of Christ."<sup>9</sup>

The Declaration of 1818 was the last significant slavery pronouncement by a Presbyterian General Assembly for well over two decades. Subsequent Assemblies not only ceased to speak out against the institution but were charged with imposing silence on the dangerous subject. To many the forces of unity and conservatism seemed to be working out their ends through a craven application of the gag rule. Leaders in the North, zealous for the unity of the church, determined to meet the growing radicalism by an insistence that the "civil" and "moral" aspects of slavery were distinguishable and that the church refrain from legislation on the "civil" phase. The influential Charles Hodge so advised, and Princeton, with its great authority throughout the church, voiced the doctrine of no action. Its organ, the *Biblical Repertory*, proclaimed that

. . . . The opinion that slave-holding is itself a crime must operate to produce the disunion of the states and the division of all ecclesiastical bodies in this country. We shall become two nations in feeling, which must soon render us two nations in fact. With regard to the church, its operation will be much more summary. If slaveholding is a heinous crime, slave holders must be excluded from the church. . . . Should the general assembly adopt it, the church is *ipso facto*, divided . . . .<sup>10</sup>

The North was advised "to follow the example of Christ in the manner of treating slavery," and the South was enjoined to follow His precepts in the treatment of slaves "and both will have reason to rejoice in the result."<sup>11</sup> Little wonder that men with quickened anti-slavery convictions deplored the teaching of "this doctrine to students in Princeton Seminary," where were trained so many of the leaders of the church for the North and for the South.<sup>12</sup>

In the early thirties Breckinridge's disbelief in the institution of slavery found expression in a participation in the colonization movement. He identified himself actively with the Maryland Colonization Society. Accompanied by his brother

<sup>9</sup> Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

<sup>10</sup> *The Biblical Repertory*, 12:301 (Apr., 1836).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 305.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas, Thomas E., *Correspondence of Thomas Ebenezer Thomas, Mainly Relating to the Anti-slavery Conflict in Ohio, Especially in the Presbyterian Church*. Dayton, Ohio, 1909, 115-117.

John, and representing the Maryland Society as agent, he undertook a speaking tour through New England. The results of this venture were such as to bring disillusionment to the Breckinridges. Accompanied by two "African princes" they found themselves subjected to suspicion and threats of attack. To the abolitionists, the Breckinridges were allies of the slaveholder, while the masses looked upon them as disturbers. Seeking a church hall in Boston, they were warned by the mayor that they "would certainly be mobbed" if they spoke.

Perhaps it was inevitable that all this should react upon, and somewhat modify, that crusading anti-slavery spirit which had found so clear and radical an expression in the strong words which Breckinridge had penned during the Kentucky campaign of 1830. After the New England tour of 1834, Breckinridge became an object of such execration to Garrison that the latter singled out the Maryland colonizationist for special abuse. With his usual unfairness or lack of balance Garrison quoted for his own purposes part of an address which Breckinridge had made early in 1834. Breckinridge, wrote Garrison, had said that the colonizationists

stand in the breach for . . . the slaveholder . . . to keep off the Abolitionist. We are his friends . . .<sup>13</sup>

But the abolitionist leader failed to allow Breckinridge to complete his own statement which made it clear that this defense of the slaveholder was "only to give him time . . . if he attempts to maintain slavery as perpetual, every one of us will be upon him too."<sup>14</sup>

In 1836, while travelling in England, Breckinridge engaged in a long series of debates on "American Slavery" with the British abolitionist, George Thompson. Breckinridge's speeches on this occasion show clearly the imprint of the savage thrusts made upon him by the abolitionists. Though he spoke sincerely against slavery, the emotional warmth of his earlier stand against the institution had cooled to allow room for his new wrath against the anti-slavery extremists. From a belief that slavery was inconsistent with every respectable social system he had come to the view that it could co-exist with any form of society. Of one thing he was certain: although slavery was con-

<sup>13</sup> *Liberator*, August 20, 1834.

<sup>14</sup> Fox, Earle, *American Colonization Society*, 169; *African Repository*, 14:137 ff. In the weeks following the visit of the Breckinridges to Boston in 1834, Garrison published a series of articles on the Maryland Colonization Society's plan of "Cruelty and Oppression." *Liberator*, Aug. 9-20, 1834.

trary to the spirit of Christianity, the triumph of abolitionism would strike a death blow to religion and to country. Yet it would be unfair to infer that Breckinridge had surrendered his principles of opposition to human slavery. His was rather the case of a man who, while combatting one evil, now found himself denounced and reviled by what he not unnaturally regarded as an even more insidious and destructive force. He was satisfied that abolitionism was the more immediately dangerous foe to church and state alike.

While there were many Presbyterians whose approach to the problem was the same as Breckinridge's, there were others who were determined to translate the anti-slavery phraseology of the Declaration of 1818 into definite action by the church to purge itself of slavery. For some years prior to 1837 local church judicatories had been addressing anti-slavery petitions to the General Assemblies, but the common practice had been promptly to lay such documents on the table. In the Assembly of 1835, however, they were referred to a committee which was instructed to report to the next Assembly.<sup>15</sup> The chairman of the committee was Dr. Samuel Miller of Princeton, who was said to have instructed his students that any preaching they might do on slavery ought to be done "with caution."

The report of Dr. Miller's committee was made to the Assembly of 1836, which was organized under New School control. The report reflected the then essentially conservative attitude of both parties in the church. It declared that since slavery was "inseparably connected" with state laws, since there existed "great diversity of opinion . . . in the churches represented in this Assembly . . ." and since "any action on the part of this Assembly would tend to distract and divide our churches . . . Resolved, that it is not expedient for the Assembly to take any further order in relation to this subject." A radical minority report, the work of the one abolitionist on the committee, was challenged by a resolution from the floor which aimed to commit the Assembly to the doctrine that slavery had Biblical sanction and was a subject outside the legislative power of the Assembly. To end this dangerous business, Dr. James Hoge introduced a resolution for postponing any action. This passed

15 Gillett, Erra Hall, *History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, 2:524, n. 2.

by a large majority.<sup>16</sup> An analysis of the vote on the resolution shows that vigorous abolitionists like John Rankin and Elijah P. Lovejoy united with staunch defenders of slavery in a vain effort to force some sort of action.

Declarations by synods and presbyteries further illustrate the increasing sectional strain in the Presbyterian church. Three of the four synods that were to be voted out of the church in 1837 had passed resolutions, not long before, demanding disciplinary action against slave holders.<sup>17</sup> At the other extreme, late in 1836 a number of southern presbyteries and synods adopted resolutions of a nature which makes it impossible to regard as alarmists those who prophesied a sectional division in the church over slavery—of the sort which overwhelmed the Methodists and the Baptists a few years later. A presbytery in South Carolina resolved that “the existence of slavery is not opposed to the will of God . . .,”<sup>18</sup> while the Synod of South Carolina resolved, for the enlightenment of northern anti-slavery “heresiarchs,” that

slavery had existed from the days of those good old slave-holders and patriots, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; that the existence of slavery is not opposed to the will of God, and whosoever has a conscience too tender to recognize this relation as lawful, is righteous over much, is wise above what is written . . . and leaves the infallible word of God for the fancies and doctrines of men.<sup>19</sup>

More significant is the declaration of the Synod of Virginia that though

the likelihood of the necessity of a geographical division, through the operation of this fanaticism, is not so great as it was some time ago; yet on this subject . . . a . . . vigilance . . . is our manifest duty.

It is worth noting that it is not heresy but “fanaticism” which

16 The resolution, which carried 154 to 87, declared that “inasmuch as the constitution of the Presbyterian Church . . . declares that no Church Judiciary ought to pretend to make laws, to bind the conscience, in virtue of their own authority; and as the urgency of the business of the Assembly, and the shortness of time . . . render it impossible to deliberate and decide judiciously on the subject of slavery in its relation to the church; therefore resolved, that this whole subject be indefinitely postponed.” *Minutes of the General Assembly*, 1836, pp. 272, 273; *Biblical Repertory*, July 1836, pp. 440, 441. Birney, in *The American Churches the Bulwarks of American Slavery*, (p. 36) states that during the sessions of the Assembly the southern delegates met apart and resolved not to submit should the Assembly do anything to make slavery “an immorality.” No confirmatory evidence of such a meeting has been found and it is possible that Birney may have confused this with the Old School Convention of 1837.

17 Crocker, Zebulon, *The Catastrophe of the Presbyterian Church in 1837*, p. 65.

18 Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

19 Crocker, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

the synod feared might divide the church. That the New School "heretics" had far more than their proportionate share of anti-slavery "fanatics" is beyond dispute, nor is it improbable that the possibility of being rid of two evils at a single stroke was carefully weighed by some southern Presbyterian leaders.

The leading Old School delegates to the Assembly met in a special convention at Philadelphia in May, 1837, a few days before the meeting of the General Assembly. At this convention it soon appeared that the South would furnish large support for the Old School and that unless the support of the section were lost as a result of some move against slavery, the Old School would have an excellent chance to control the Assembly. It is unnecessary to suppose that a plot existed to excommunicate members or to "cut off" whole synods especially identified with hostility to slavery, yet some of the southern Old School leaders no doubt realized that a cutting of the tie that bound several of the northern synods to the church would have social as well as doctrinal advantages and significance.<sup>20</sup>

The speeches made at the Old School convention lead to the conclusion that the purposes of some of those who met there were by no means confined to matters of dogma and church government. Breckinridge, to be sure, assured his fellow delegates that the convention's purpose was restricted to matters of "doctrine and order—the quintessence of Presbyterianism"<sup>21</sup>; but this statement expressed the hope of its author rather than what was plainly in the minds of some of the southern delegates. There is ample evidence to support the conclusion that some of the latter, both clergy and laity, went to the convention determined to demand support for slavery or, this failing, complete silence on the subject. The problem was both complex and simple. For northern or border state Old School Presbyterians with anti-slavery convictions and commitments, it was genuinely complex and disturbing to convictions. On the other hand, for southern pro-slavery orthodox leaders such as Baxter and Plummer the issue was simple. To such, the presence of the New School party in the church, certainly its dominance in the As-

20 In 1836 the membership of the Presbyterian church was 220,557, of which all but 57,309 were in the North, giving the South but 21% of the total. In 1838, as a result of the schism, the South had 53,792 members of a total Old South membership of 177,665. The South had now 30% of the total. These figures have been compiled from reports of the presbyteries to the General Assembly. See *Minutes of the General Assembly*, 1836, and 1838.

21 *Western Presbyterian Herald*, June 1, 1837.

sembly, was doubly dangerous, while the subjugation of that party, or its removal from the church, would bring doctrinal purity and would serve to strengthen the church against a complete sectional division over slavery.

Southern members of the convention made it plain that they were in theological agreement with Breckinridge. However, though this consideration would be of vital importance were there to be a real test of strength between the Old and New School forces in the Assembly, it is plain from several of the speeches made in the convention that there would be little prospect of establishing Old School control over the Assembly unless the southern members of the convention were first reassured as to that party's stand on slavery. It is plain that when Dr. Baxter represented southern Old School opinion as showing "unanimity on one point,—that is, that the connection with northern Associations is injurious, anti-Presbyterian, and ought to come to an end," he referred to the slavery issue as well as to matters of doctrine.<sup>22</sup>

The southern position was voiced most forcefully by Dr. William S. Plumer of Virginia. Insisting that "all we ask is that the Supreme Judicatory do nothing in the way of legislation on . . . slavery . . .," he followed with a long list of reasons why that body should "not . . . touch it in any way of legislation." Several of these are worth special mention. Plumer insisted that the Assembly lacked the legal power to legislate on slavery. He thought it "incredible that . . . it was ever contemplated to censure what was a common practice . . . action would be unconstitutional . . ." After voicing the common argument that slavery was not contrary to Christ's teachings, Plumer proceeded to warn that to legislate on the subject would involve the church in politics.

One of Plumer's points is particularly instructive in relation to the large problem of the relationship of slavery to the schism. Something of the manner in which the determination to resist abolitionism reinforced the conviction that the Scriptures enjoined separation from those who were deemed to have abandoned the standards of the church appears in these words:

In a delegated body as large as the Assembly there will always be some who avail themselves of the opportunity . . . to make . . . insulting speeches. . . . We have no idea of needlessly permitting ourselves to be placed in a situation so unpleasant . . . should the Assembly . . . legislate

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, June 1, 1837.

and decide that slaveholding is a sin, then, of course, the persons who should thus vote, would wish the Southern churches cut off for immorality, and the Southern churches would all feel themselves instructed by the Apostle Paul to "withdraw from such." . . . Thus our church would be rent asunder, and Southern and Northern Presbyterians and Congregationalists could no longer meet, even in a social way, and hail each other as brethren. . . . Well, the work of division thus begun must go on, and soon another, and another, and yet another denomination will divide North and South. . . . Then nothing is left . . . except to . . . rend the star-spangled banner in twain. . . . Can it be that the righteous Judge of all the earth has so dreadful a controversy with the Presbyterian Church of the United States as to give her up to the folly and madness of being the first to hoist the gate and let the flood of desolation roll in!<sup>23</sup>

Indeed, if the picture here drawn sums up what many in the convention believed—and there is no reason to suppose the contrary—it seems reasonable to believe that those who carried out the harsh measures of 1837 did so from a strange mixture of motives and that among these should be listed not only abhorrence of "heresy" and abolitionism but also the conviction that they were best serving the interests of country.

The general situation suggested the need for concessions, particularly to the southern side. If the Old School party were to reverse its minority status in the Assembly no one "sound" in dogma but moderately anti-slavery could well be alienated. Those most interested in the ecclesiastical and theological controversy *per se* were concerned that their party should suffer no losses as a result of the slavery issue. It was likewise incumbent on southern leaders, who were desirous that there be a separation from the New School, that they be content with silence on the slavery question. To have insisted that the Assembly of 1837 abandon the Declaration of 1818 in favor of one more favorable to the South would have been very dangerous.

Breckinridge was much concerned for fear slavery would "trench on the greater controversy, and absorb it, as Aaron's rod devoured all the other rods."<sup>24</sup> In an earnest appeal to the members of the convention he laid before them his own real dilemma and, further, pointed out the only possible program for cooperation between Old School Presbyterians who, though agreed on dogma, could not see eye to eye on slavery:

I cannot unsay what our fathers said. We must not be asked to. . . . Let not our brethren come to us, in the time of trouble, and offer to assist us, only on the condition of our changing. We . . . must not be asked to

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

change old Presbyterian principles on the subject of slavery. It is ruinous to the souls of men and to the truth to make such a demand at the price of laboring together with us. . . . I deprecate the introduction of the subject:—I will not recede from what my fathers did—but I will not lay any other burden on my brethren.<sup>25</sup>

It would be unprofitable here to recite the charges and re-criminations that were made by Presbyterians, by other church people and particularly by the non-churchly concerning the alleged sinister motives that underlay the Presbyterian schism of 1837. It is not necessary to credit all of these charges at face value in order to reach the conclusion that this schism involved the issue of slavery to a far greater extent than has been recognized in modern discussion of the subject, though the essential truth of the matter was stated by Gillett in 1864.<sup>26</sup> Whatever the intent of the leaders who were responsible for the schism, it is plain that the great division of 1837 left a Presbyterian (Old School) church definitely more conservative on the slavery issue than the Presbyterian church had been prior to the schism.<sup>27</sup>

25 *Ibid.* How far the Assembly of 1837 went to placate the South may be seen in portions of its "Circular Letter" and its "Narrative of the State of Religion." The latter voiced the opinion that slaves are "providentially placed among us; and their circumstances call upon us for that moral and religious instruction which will conduce to their happiness, and prepare them to perform their duties as men and Christians. The prayer of every benevolent heart should ascend to God for their best interests, and especially that all classes of them may be delivered from that worst of bondage the thralldom of sin and Satan." The dominance of an extreme social conservatism in the Old School organization, for the next generation, is well foreshadowed in the following extract from the "Circular Letter":

One of the most formidable evils of the present crisis is the wide spread and ever restless spirit of *radicalism*, manifest both in the church and in the state. Its leading principle everywhere seems to be to level all order to the dust. Mighty only in power to destroy, it has driven its deep agitations through the bosom of our beloved church. Amidst the multiplied and revolting forms in which it has appeared, it is always animated by one principle. It is ever the same levelling revolutionary spirit, and tends to the same ruinous results. It has, in succession, driven to extreme fanaticism the great cause of revivals of religion, of temperance, and of the rights of man.

*Minutes of the General Assembly, 1837*, pp. 507, 509-510. There is an indication of how faithful the Presbyterian Church (Old School) remained to this social philosophy in a tribute by the great South Carolinian, Thornwell, a decade later. Thornwell characterized the stand of the Old School as "wise, moderate, and scriptural . . . based upon . . . the only ground upon which the religious denominations of the country, if not the country itself, can be saved from division and disunion." *Southern Presbyterian Review*, Dec. 1848, pp. 311, 328.

26 Gillett, *op. cit.*, 2:522-527.

27 There is no space here to discuss the many and persistent charges which New School Presbyterians heaped upon Breckinridge for his part in the schism. His position had been a most difficult one, and the complete reconciliation of his problem impossible. "The Southern members, want us to say things in favour of slavery, which are both false and impossible; and seem resolved to press it,"

The Presbyterian schism of 1837 merits the attention of anyone who may be interested in the religious and social manifestations of sectionalism. Not sectional in the sense of the Methodist and Baptist schisms of the forties, the earlier Old School-New School division had important sectional aspects and implications. If not a direct cause of the schism, slavery was at least inextricably bound up in it. Baxter, Plumer, Breckinridge, Joshua L. Wilson<sup>28</sup>—leaders with views on slavery greatly at variance—all gave a hand when the Assembly, without benefit of anaesthesia, applied the knife to sever from the body ecclesiastical those great upper portions which had been adjudged most incurable in social creed as well as in theology. The varied effects of this seemingly needless operation go beyond the bounds of this study. The most striking effect on the Old School church is clear and socially important. The schism of 1837 made of this church the most significant Protestant organization to avoid division into North and South before 1861. So important an example of unity, in a generation characterized by the severing of national bonds, deserves further study and interpretation.

he wrote his wife from the Old School Convention (May 13, 1837). As he looked back over his course in 1837, despite the many charges by New School Presbyterians that he had sacrificed zeal for emancipation to "orthodoxy," Breckinridge seemed fairly well satisfied with his stand. He wrote that "in 1837, my whole object . . . was to prevent the orthodox from introducing the question of slavery at all into the Convention or Assembly of that year. That subject was excluded—the church was saved . . . ." *Baltimore Literary and Religious Magazine*, 5:131 (Mar., 1839). Though it must be insisted that Breckinridge did not surrender his conviction that slavery should be put on the course of extinction yet it is true that the coincidence of a degree of radicalism with "heresy," in the case of the northern New School Presbyterians, left its imprint upon him. "What erroneous sectaries ever did anything to advance any great interest of man?" he asked. ". . . what evangelical denomination ever did real injury to any? Not one . . ." *Ibid.*, 3:307 (July, 1837). This suggests, correctly, that Breckinridge might be counted upon to extend to the limit his patience with his orthodox, but pro-slavery, brethren of the South. Denounced as a pro-slavery zealot by abolitionists, he was branded an abolitionist by extreme southerners. To one of these latter charges he returned this revealing answer: ". . . As to the matter of Slavery, to be honest with you, my dear brother, my only fear is that I have not said enough about it; that out of love to our church, & to very dear brethren in the South . . . I have kept too near the outer edge of that question. I am no 'abolitionist' in the technical sense; far from it. But I love liberty . . . & pray for Slavery to be brought to an end." Breckinridge to Coit, Jan. 10, 1843.

- 28 The stormy career of the "frontier controversialist," Joshua L. Wilson, furnishes a good example of the problem which confronted those orthodox leaders who were also opposed to slavery. "Wilson was so completely absorbed in the problem of extirpating 'error' . . . that in the convention of 1837 he decided to 'let the Southern brethren manage their own concerns in their own way.'" Raymond L. Hightower, *Joshua L. Wilson, Frontier Controversialist*, University of Chicago typed Ph. D. thesis, and in *Church History*, 1933, p. 211.

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## IN MEMORIAM

### RALPH BROUWER POMEROY

The Rev. Ralph Brouwer Pomeroy died August 14, 1935, following a considerable period of ill health. He was born in 1876 and received his education at Columbia University and the General Theological Seminary. After having been ordained a deacon in the Episcopal Church in 1901 and a priest in 1902, he served for four years as curate at a church in Newport, Rhode Island, and from 1906 to 1913 was assistant minister at Trinity Church, Princeton, New Jersey. In the latter year he was made rector of that important parish and soon after became lecturer on Religion at Princeton University, where he had already received an M. A. degree.

In 1917 Mr. Pomeroy gave up these positions to become instructor in Church History, Polity and Canon Law at the General Theological Seminary. Two years later, he was elected to the professorship of Ecclesiastical Polity and Canon Law at the Seminary and held this office until 1925. In connection with his Seminary work, he acted as priest in charge of a small parish at West Orange, New Jersey; as associate in the department of Religion at Columbia University, 1920-23; and as Warden and Professor of Church History at the New York Training School for Deaconesses, 1922-24. At the end of 1924 he retired from his academic positions, but continued his pastoral work until the time of his death.

Professor Pomeroy was a member of the American Historical Association, the American Society of Church History and other learned bodies. He was a ready speaker, a facile writer and a popular lecturer and found his work and delight in the exercise of these gifts. He attempted no sustained literary work and his publications consisted principally of essays, sermons and magazine articles. In 1924 he was married to Miss Florence Louise Walton, who survives him.

CHARLES N. SHEPHARD.

### HENRY CLAY VEDDER, A.M., D.D.

Henry Clay Vedder, long a member of the American Society of Church History, died in Chester Hospital, Chester, Pennsylvania, on Sunday, October 13, 1935.

Dr. Vedder was born in De Ruyter, New York, on February 26, 1853. Attending the University of Rochester he received his A.B. in 1873, his A.M. in 1876 and was honored with a D.D. in 1897. Graduating also from the Rochester Theological Seminary in 1876, he joined the editorial staff of *The Examiner* in that year, remaining a member thereof until 1894—the last two years being Editor-in-Chief. In this year he was called to

Crozer Theological Seminary, Chester, Pennsylvania, to become Professor of Church History, which chair he held until his retirement in 1926. During the years 1906-09 he was also librarian of this institution. Since 1928 he had been a member of the editorial staff of *The Chester Times*, writing a daily column which he entitled "A Chief and His Notes," which with its evidence of wide knowledge, balanced judgment, deep insight and keen wit delighted his many readers. He also contributed an editorial in almost each daily issue. His religious editorials of the Saturday paper, always instructive, inspiring and charmingly written, were eagerly read and deeply appreciated.

The funeral services were held in Commencement Hall, Crozer Theological Seminary, on Wednesday afternoon, October 16, Rev. Edwin S. Fry, Dr. Vedder's pastor having charge of the ceremonies. Dr. Milton G. Evans, President Emeritus of Crozer Seminary, delivered the principal address. Having been related to the Seminary since 1887 as student and teacher, he was long an associate of Dr. Vedder and brought to the large congregation which had gathered to pay tribute to the memory of teacher and friend an intimate understanding of his character and achievements. He spoke of his high-mindedness, his persistent search for truth, his historical acumen, catholicity of spirit, devotion to church, home and community, his gentleness of character. Prayer was offered by President J. H. Franklin and by Professor R. E. E. Harkness, Dr. Vedder's successor in the chair of Church History in Crozer Seminary.

Of the products of Dr. Vedder's pen word need not be spoken. His many historical volumes are well known, especially those dealing with the Reformation period. He was a prolific writer and always stimulating. His brief articles, appearing in later years, in magazines and denominational press still revealed his vigor and his facility.

R. E. E. HARKNESS.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### CHURCH AND STATE IN ENGLAND IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

By NORMAN SYKES. Cambridge: at the University Press; New York: The Macmillan Co., 1934. xi, 455 pages. \$7.00.

The Church of England in the eighteenth century has fared ill at the hands of historians. That the Wesleyan revival on the one hand and the Oxford Movement on the other should be depicted in the brilliant colors thought to be their due, the chroniclers of these movements have often felt it needful to paint the eighteenth century church in the deepest black. Here is a book, however, which should rejoice the heart of the impartial student, for although it portrays the shortcomings of the eighteenth century church with entire frankness, it also pictures its virtues, which, it appears, were of no mean quality and variety.

The title is slightly misleading, for the book does much more than expound the relations of church and state, although it does that to perfection. It also gives a full length picture of the church in eighteenth century England, its faith, its practice, its intellectual position, its political philosophy, the life and work of its clergy, and the religious tone of its laity, all carefully and aptly illumined by quotation from contemporary writings, many of which have not hitherto been published.

What seems to the reviewer to be a sound thesis of the author is that pluralism, non-residence, clerical promotion as a result of support of the government, episcopal attendance in Parliament to the neglect of diocesan duties, poverty of the lower clergy and affluence of the higher, indeed all "the numerous catalogue of administrative anomalies which are alleged as the peculiar vice of the century," were not at all peculiar to the eighteenth century but were inherited by it from the centuries preceding, both before and after the Reformation, and were in fact as characteristic of the oft-praised Caroline church as of the must abused Hanoverian. Further, that the careers of Bishop Hoadly and Watson, invariably pounced upon as typical of the eighteenth century, were not typical but exceptional and, curiously, the church reforms long advocated by Bishop Watson and, in his day, made impossible by the fear of all change produced by the French Revolution, were exactly those which were finally effected in the nineteenth century and for which later men and movements are credited.

The book, however, is not an apologia for the Hanoverian church; it is an attempt to give a true picture of that church, and, in the opinion of the reviewer, succeeds admirably. It has been a long time since he has read any book on church history which he can commend so unreservedly as this.

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J. A. Muller.

## LUTHER'S GERMAN BIBLE

By M. REU. Columbus, O.: The Lutheran Book Concern, 1934. xiv, 364, 226 pages. \$4.00.

In this compressed and competent study Dr. Reu gives us the ripe fruit of his Luther scholarship. He claims for the facts presented no novelty, but merely that they have been assembled with a view to completeness from the scattered results of other men's detailed investigations. So we find many references to the studies of P. Pietsch, H. Vollmer, W. Walther and other experts. The recognition given of these researches in the text and notes will enable the reader who is so disposed to carry his inquiry farther. But the average reader will find the book sufficient in itself; and assuredly he who masters its contents will have a good store of knowledge of the subject.

Dr. Reu has frankly and convincingly confuted the old prejudiced assumption that the Bible was neglected in the Middle Ages. It is an assumption which no student of medieval literature could possibly entertain; but there is much value in the specific and statistical data here presented to show the wide circulation and use of Scripture in Germany before Luther. Not only the clergy, but the intelligent lay people, could if they wished obtain a knowledge of the Bible, and still more easily of those extensive parts of it which were included in the *plenaria* (the pericopes with glosses and illustrations) and other selected portions. About eighty pages of the long Appendix of the book are devoted to illustrative extracts from Bible texts in German, including selections from History Bibles, *plenaria*, and Psalters, which range in date from the eighth to the fifteenth century. These selections are sure to be of interest not only to Bible scholars but also to students and teachers of Germanics.

But the main concern of our author is of course with the work of Luther; and here, it seems to me he has accomplished two things. He has integrated the growth of Luther's appreciation of, and labor over, the Bible with the Reformer's religious biography as a whole; and he has given a fresh impression of the uniqueness of Luther's genius. A devout admirer of Luther, Reu nevertheless does not hesitate to reject some statements attributed to him in the *Tischreden* respecting the prevailing ignorance of the Bible on the part of priests and people in his boyhood. Following Veit Dietrich's version of the story of Luther's first view of an entire Bible, he places this incident in the Magdeburg period, that is, in Luther's fourteenth or fifteenth year. As a novice he was presented with a Bible bound in red leather; monks of his order were required to study the Scriptures "industriously."

In a chapter entitled "Luther's eyes are opened to the Heart of Scripture," Dr. Reu, with ample quotation from the Reformer's glowing paragraphs, explains the discovery by Luther of what was to be for him the key to the Bible. It is here that our author finds the great gift of Luther to his contemporaries, and the justification of the statement that "the Bible was a closed book" before him. It was spiritually a closed

book, until Luther shed the true light upon it by making Christ "the center and substance of all Scripture" (pp. 135f.)

Whatever may be said of this as an enduring principle of Old Testament interpretation, there can be no doubt of its importance for Luther and for his movement. It was his intense religious experience that awakened his zeal for the popularization of the Bible, and made him the great translator that he was. Dr. Reu helps us to realize the nature of Luther's task as a translator by showing the inadequacy of the previous translations. No translator before him understood the original languages of the Bible, and none had his knowledge of German speech. Luther had the highest standards with respect to both these aspects of his task. We see him in this book wrestling with words and their meanings in order to make Moses and the prophets speak German. He was by no means content with the right word: still more he insisted on the structure, word-order and idiom of the spoken language. Undoubtedly he had an amazing aptitude for the niceties of language, the very flavor of words. The patience, constancy, and energy with which he labored on the German Bible and its repeated versions are revealed here with extraordinary effect. In the Bible scholar and language student, we almost forgot the vituperative Luther of the controversies.

The book has been written in German and pleasingly translated by J. C. Mattes, S. Salzmann, and W. Hertel. It deserves a second edition, and if this is demanded the author will have an opportunity to eliminate the few textual errors that have escaped the proofreader. (I note: Migné for Migne, p. 13; homiliary for homiliary, p. 50; Cluney for Cluny, p. 58; fourteenth for sixteenth, p. 71; Étables for Étaples, p. 101).

The University of Chicago

John T. McNeill.

### FREEDOM AND THE SPIRIT

By NICHOLAS BERDYAEV. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935. xix, 362 pages. \$3.75.

The Russian movement of religious philosophy, counting among its representatives such men as Khomyakov, Dostoyevsky, and Solovyev, produced a reinterpretation of the Eastern Orthodox theological tradition which is comparable to similar efforts at doctrinal restatement in the Western church, although the results attained differ widely. The most outstanding modern representative of that distinguished group of philosophers and lay theologians is Nicholas Berdyaev, whose numerous works are fortunately just now being published in English translation.

In the present volume, Berdyaev has expounded his religious views in the fullest systematic manner hitherto attempted by him, and thus from the point of view of theological interest this is his most important work. He frankly describes himself as a "Christian theosophist, in the sense in which Clement of Alexandria, Origen, St. Gregory of Nyssa, Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa, Jacob Boehme, St. Martin, Francis Baader, and Vladimir Solovyev were Christian theosophists" (p. xix). He therefore

consciously exceeds the limits of official Orthodoxy, although his "Gnosticism" or "mysticism" is not regarded by him as being opposed to the essentials of historic Christianity. He stresses the Platonic element in Christianity, so congenial to the Eastern Orthodox tradition, although he often confuses it with monistic Neoplatonism. There is much which to the present reviewer appears self-contradictory—and which fails to convey any clear meaning to his mind. The author's mystical interpretations sometimes assume an aspect of the proverbial night in which all cows are black. But there are also rather frequent flashes of profound insight into the depths of the spiritual meaning of life. Particularly important is his treatment of human freedom as the fundamental concept of the author's religious philosophy (the original title of the book is *Philosophy of a Free Spirit*), and his interpretation of the church (chap. X) which he builds upon the characteristic views of the older Slavophiles such as Khomyakov, who advanced the idea of "*sobornost*" (catholicity understood in the spiritual, not geographical, sense) as the most important constituent element of its character.

Undoubtedly, the volume is an important contribution to the understanding of the theological developments in modern Orthodoxy, and is an eloquent proof of the profound changes which are taking place in this communion, which is commonly assumed to be static and unprogressive.

It seems fair to remark that in many instances the difficult style of the book is due to the translation rather than to the original. The translator has frequently resorted to paraphrasing of the original text, with the result that he obscured the meaning which the author wished to convey.

The Chicago Theological Seminary

Matthew Spinka

#### A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN VENEZUELA, 1810-1830

By MARY WATTERS. Chapel Hill, N. C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1933. 260 pages. \$2.50.

This scholarly study of the church in Venezuela is largely due to the suggestion of Professor Pierson of the University of North Carolina, who has through the years inspired students with his lectures on Hispanic American civilizations and institutions. The present study was begun in his seminar in Venezuela history.

The author in her presentation of the history of Roman Catholicism in Venezuela follows the general outline of the political history of that republic, and throughout the study emphasis is placed upon the relation of the church to the government rather than upon the actual work of the church as carried on among the people. The title therefore might better have been church and state in Venezuela. After an introductory chapter on colonial background the author considers in five chapters the relation of the church to the War for Independence, the Bolivarian regime, to the conservative oligarchy from 1830 to 1848, to the Monagas régime, and to Guzman Blanco, with a final chapter on the present status of the church in Venezuela. An appendix contains the *Law of the Patronage* enacted in Bogotá in 1824, followed by an elaborate bibliography of fifteen pages.

This history of the colonial church in Venezuela is peculiar in that many of its high officials were creoles, in contrast to the situation in other sections of colonial Hispanic America where the chief positions were generally in the hands of Spanish appointees. This resulted in the development of a large degree of individualism and decentralization. In fact the colonial church in Venezuela was not unified, from the standpoint of administration, until the very eve of independence. The individualism developed in the colonial period makes it impossible to generalize as to the attitude of the Venezuelan clergy toward the War for Independence. Under Bolivar a temporizing policy toward the church was adopted which finally resulted in bringing it over to the support of the independent government. During the Páez régime the government kept the church under close surveillance and strictly upheld the law of the patronage, maintaining that the right of patronage formerly exercised by the kings of Spain was assumed by the republic. During these years the church lost in influence and in social prestige and the general religious conditions in the country were deplorable. The attempt in 1862 to establish a concordat with the papacy failed to meet the approval of Congress, a fact regarded by Venezuelan historians as a national victory.

As a whole the Catholic church in Venezuela has steadily declined since the late colonial period. National support of the church at the present time is meager and it possesses little property and less influence. Few native Venezuelans enter its service as priests, and in recent years it has been found necessary to permit foreign ecclesiastics to enter the country in order to fill the numerous vacant parishes. Some Venezuelan intellectuals regard the reduction of the influence of the church as a cause for rejoicing; others, however, especially those who have made the most careful study of Venezuelan society, feel that the general moral situation can only be lifted by the restoration of the influence of religion.

The University of Chicago

William W. Sweet.

### THE CHRISTIANITY OF IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

By CYRIL C. RICHARDSON. New York: Columbia University Press, 1935. 120 pages. \$2.00.

It seems as though Ignatius of Antioch is again becoming the object of special study. Several factors are probably contributing to this, among them the provocative chapter on Ignatius by Canon Streeter in his *Primitive Church*. Certain it is that the martyred bishop of Antioch was a man of such importance and station as to afford fruitful material for study to a larger degree than has been recognized. However, the ambitious student and author must ever be conscious of the limitations on his material in that the Ignatian letters were all written within a relatively short period of time and dealt in the main with one or two large subjects.

This new volume on Ignatius is the expansion of a doctor's dissertation presented to the faculty of the Union Theological Seminary. It endeavors to fill the large assignment of its title by a series of eight brief disconnected essays on selected phases of Ignatius' thought, such as

"Faith," "Agape," "Unity," "God," "Eucharist," etc.; two on the relationship to Paul and John respectively, and two appendices on the heresies. An introductory essay is prefixed and indices complete the structure of the book.

One rather new suggestion as to the historical setting of Ignatius' correspondence is that he was dealing not with one heresy but with two: one a docetism, another a Judaizing movement. The latter heresy is, however, not clearly identifiable. It would seem rather that Ignatius uses the term "Judaism" as a polemic label to designate perhaps various types of opponents within the church, among them possibly even the docetists, simply because of their Christ-less Christianity.

Richardson's study contains many fine observations and suggestive interpretations, notably in the chapters on Agape, Life, Unity, among them the recurring insistence that Ignatius' convictions "are grounded not in theory, but in experience" (p. 37). Yet the present reviewer cannot feel that we have Ignatius' Christianity restored in this study. The episcopal question is omitted, and it is in this very matter that we find some of the most vital elements of the bishop's Christianity, e.g., his claim to prophetic inspiration for himself and the bishop *per se*, with all that it meant in a spiritual sense. Thus the element of personal mysticism receives very little attention. Further, the cultic aspect of Ignatius' religion, especially with its background of mystery cults, is largely overlooked or definitely minimized, and consequently, sacramentalism is virtually ruled out. Thus the general tendency of this work seems to be to reduce Ignatius' Christianity to a rather uncolorful moralism.

Some statements which express this view-point and which Ignatian scholars will find difficult of acceptance are the following: "He has none of the Pauline confidence in the Spirit and its fruits" (p. 7). "The word 'theophoros' also expresses the indwelling God, . . . the ethical content of this relationship becomes apparent. . . . Consecration is dependent upon submission to the bishop (Eph. 2:22), and 'to be full of God' (Mag. 14) probably means little more than 'to be morally conformed to Him'" (p. 38). "The evidence for the development of the sacramentalism in Ignatius is so meager, that no closer relationship of the elemental bread with the body of Christ can be assumed than that expressed in Paul" (pp. 55-6). "The Eucharist comes to be the pledge of this present life and future hope, not so much by virtue of any mystic efficacy in the elements, as by the believer's inseparable connection with the Christian brotherhood" (p. 56).

Walla Walla College

Frederick A. Schilling.

### A THIRD CENTURY PAPYRUS CODEX OF THE EPISTLES OF PAUL

Edited by HENRY A. SANDERS. University of Michigan Studies, Humanistic Series vol. xxxviii. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1935. 127 pages. \$3.00.

In this volume Professor Sanders once more places textual critics of the New Testament greatly in his debt. The papyrus (P 46) is already

known through some leaves of it acquired by Mr. Chester Beatty of London and published by Sir Frederick Kenyon (*The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri*, Fasc. III, London, 1934). A much larger portion was bought by the University of Michigan and this together with the Beatty leaves has been edited as a continuous text by Professor Sanders.

Diplomatically the papyrus presents no startling features but exhibits numerous points of interest to the specialist. Important for the general reader is the fact that Sanders is inclined to date the manuscript late rather than early (Kenyon) in the third century.

The epistles found in the extant portions of the codex are in the order: Romans (Rom. 16.25-27 appears between 15.33 and 16.1), I and II Corinthians, Ephesians, Galatians, Philippians, Colossians, I and II Thessalonians. Kenyon believed that the papyrus originally contained all the major epistles of Paul, omitting the Pastorals, but Sanders with fuller diplomatic evidence thinks that Philemon appeared between Galatians and Philippians and that I and II Timothy may have followed II Thessalonians. The order of the epistles is exceptional especially in the occurrence of Hebrews immediately after Romans (supported only by the minuscule 1919) and of Ephesians before Galatians (also supported only by 1919 which, however, places both epistles just before the Pastorals).

The principal interest of the manuscript lies in its importance for the textual criticism of the Pauline epistles. Sanders' discussion and the preliminary observations of Kenyon, Lietzmann, and Smothers show how fundamental are the problems raised by this and other recently discovered textual material antedating the fourth century. In Westcott and Hort's terminology the text of P 46 would be described as a mixture of Neutral and Western. On the one side its principal ally is B followed at some distance by X; among Western supporters DEFG are the most consistent. The concentration of interest on the textual problems of the gospels, especially on Mark, as well as the fluctuating sense and uncertain historical implications of most of the old textual categories make an assured classification of P 46 impossible. Historically it occupies a position in Egypt before the Alexandrian revision and, as Lietzmann suggests, is probably a fair sample of the materials on which the Alexandrian revisers had to work. Whether its "Western affinities" imply that the text of the New Testament first brought to Egypt was of that character has yet to be determined.

Brown University, Providence, R. I.

Robert P. Casey

### LA RÉACTION PAÏENNE

ÉTUDE SUR LA POLÉMIQUE ANTICHRÉTIENNE DU I<sup>ER</sup> AU VI<sup>E</sup> SIÈCLE.  
By PIERRE DE LABRIOLLE. Paris: L'Artisan du Livre, 1934. 519 pages.  
40 francs.

The full story of the intellectual warfare of paganism against the ancient church, not less interesting than the record of the persecutions, is told here for the first time. The materials for the account were collected almost two centuries ago, but for a different purpose, by Nathaniel Lard-

ner in his *Jewish and Heathen Testimonies*, and Johannes Geffcken's *Zwei griechen Apologeten* indicated the thread upon which the story was to be strung. The principal characters still are Celsus, Porphyry, and the Emperor Julian, but many others labored in the same cause, and Professor Labriolle has added several new names to the well-known list. Of special interest are the changes in tactics throughout the centuries. Early indifference to the new religion soon gave way to contempt and suspicion, then to sarcasm and abuse mingled with pleas for conformity to the old ways; and finally as the fight grew hotter, the full force of literary, historical and philosophical criticism was thrown into the fray. The completeness of the victory of the Christians under the Emperor Theodosius I cannot hide the fact that the victor bore many scars of the conflict, some of them remaining in the "Question Literature" to perplex believers for centuries to come.

The author has told the story so well that little could be added except by way of interpretation and background. Too little notice is given to the Jewish polemic, from which the later antagonists of the church learned so much. Despite the fullness of detail, the continuity of the account is not handled as well as by Geffcken. More consideration might have been given to the development of the Christian apologetic; the differences, for example, between Origen and Eusebius, and between Eusebius and Cyril of Alexandria, are very striking and significant, showing that the foe had improved his weapons. The author recounts some of the efforts which were made to rehabilitate paganism so as to make it a respectable rival to Christianity, and he might have mentioned others. It is remarkable how much of Celsus' treatise is devoted to defense of the traditional religion. The book is a welcome addition to the literature on early Christianity.

New Haven, Conn.

Amos B. Hulén

#### THE FRENCH JESUITS IN LOWER LOUISIANA (1700-1763)

By JEANE DELANGLEZ, S. J. Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America, 1935. 547 pages.

This lengthy doctoral dissertation covers the history of the Jesuits in Lower Louisiana from their arrival in 1700 until their suppression in 1763. The Jesuits were sent by the French Government for the primary purpose of evangelizing the Indians so that they might be kept under French control. These missionaries could materially counteract the English influence already present, and it was hoped that the effectiveness of one Jesuit might be equal to that of a garrison of soldiers. The followers of Loyola were chosen for this special work because of the small number of Capuchins then in Louisiana and because of their special fitness to deal with the Indians. In the face of tremendous difficulties, hostility against the order in France, and much opposition from the Capuchins, the Jesuits, although failing to convert many Indians, were to some degree more successful in the ulterior motive for which they were sent by the French.

The patience and extensiveness of this research is clearly revealed by an eighteen page bibliography of the materials which were gathered from

North America and Europe. The title of the book hardly seems adequate, for the author often goes far afield to relate by a minute account some remote instance in which a Jesuit had an insignificant role. He makes no effort to disguise his sympathies and it is likely that some readers will consider the book a defense of the Jesuits and an indictment of the Capuchins. The book, in spite of minor faults, is an excellent study of an order which exerted a highly important influence in the period and locality under consideration. The author is to be commended in his choice of a subject which has been neglected all too long.

Birmingham-Southern College

Walter B. Posey.

### HISTORY OF MISSOURI BAPTISTS

By R. S. DOUGLASS. St. Louis: Executive Board of the Missouri Baptist General Association, 1934. 545 pages.

This clearly titled book might be described as an ecclesiastical and personal account of one of the aggressive pioneering sects in a great border state during its first one hundred and thirty-six years. It was the first Protestant body to get a foothold west of the Missouri River and at the end of a century and a third had two hundred and forty-three thousand members in Missouri.

The book is a thesaurus of names, dates and events, yet the crowding details are marshaled in such a way as to make it much more. The vital story is told in six periods in each of which general characteristics are given; then further facts are enumerated as to churches, missions and men under the names of "Associations" organized in that period. Thus, and with a good index, it is easy to get what one wants and skip the rest.

There is much telling, sometimes thrilling biography. Men like John Mason Peck, Jeremiah Vardeman and William Thompson, were phenomenal personalities. Our day of colder blood would do well to study early Missouri heroes.

Intensely sectional and sectarian topics are treated with the candor and fairness of an experienced student and teacher of history. It is the story of extreme independents on the American frontier, more tenacious of individual rights than of obligations to others, yet under compulsion to be neighborly and achieving considerable solidarity under the title "Association." To that the sovereign churches (five to fifty members, occasionally a hundred) sent not delegates but only "messengers." Naturally these individualists enjoyed many sharp disputes. Seven major differences were fought through in less than fourteen decades. The deepest difference was as to missions or anti-missions. Of the eighty-five Associations now existing four are avowedly anti-missionary. Most of the local churches and groups of that kind have died a natural death. Public interdenominational debates, once rife, have died out, conferences for co-operation are now incipient.

While the dominant note of the whole history has been individual evangelism accompanied largely by argumentative and emotional preach-

ing, ten colleges have been founded, of which William Jewell is foremost. Two words might appropriately be printed on the cover of this history in gilt letters, Personality and Association.

Yonkers, N. Y.

Lemuel Call Barnes

#### THE EMPEROR CHARLES IV

By BEDE JARRETT. New York: Sheed & Ward Inc., 1935. xxi, 247 pages. \$3.00.

Considering the scarcity of books dealing with the important figure of the fourteenth century emperor Charles IV, one cannot but welcome this last of the literary productions of the late Father Bede. He has given a translation of the Latin version of Charles' autobiography, and has supplemented it with his own biographical study.

It is to be regretted, however, that Father Bede has not compared the Latin version of the emperor's autobiography with its Czech original, for he would have avoided a number of more or less serious errors which have crept in. Some of these errors affect the meaning which the original conveys, while others are merely verbal changes which obscure the sense. The same criticism applies to the author's own treatment of the subject. The names of persons and places are frequently given in a form so corrupt as to be often unrecognizable. Thus, for instance, he speaks of St. Limila instead of Ludmila (p. 56), and converts the Lusatian Bautzen into Budweis (which, by the way, is certainly better known). That the author is not at home in Bohemian history is evident throughout the volume. Among the more serious misstatements is the assertion that the first archbishop of Bohemia was "John of Drazic," instead of Ernst of Pardubice. Moreover, how could anyone who has ever seen a Czech book suppose that the Czechs use "Greek script" (p. 71)? It is equally surprising to find that "Bohemia is more properly Czech than Slavonic," and that "Lusatia has a Wend population more akin to the Prussians and the Letts than to the true German or the Slav!" (p. 71).

Altogether it cannot be said that the author has produced a competent and critical study of the life of the great emperor.

The Chicago Theological Seminary

Matthew Spinka

#### MAKERS OF CHRISTIANITY FROM ALFRED THE GREAT TO SCHLEIERMACHER

By JOHN T. McNEILL. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1935. viii, 277 pages. \$2.

Many teachers of church history, reading Professor McNeill's delightful book, will feel an urge to abandon approaches to the subject from the point of view of politics or economics or sociology or theology or group-psychology and adopt the biographical method. Really this is the most complete and inclusive method. Let anybody fairly acquainted with church history walk through this noble gallery of portraits. Here are

"Leaders out of Chaos", "Apostles of Monastic Piety", "Papal Rulers of the West", "Brothers and Sisters of the Poor", "The Glorious Company of the Teachers", "The Noble Army of the Heretics", "The Goodly Fellowship of the Reformers", "Pathfinders of Liberal Christianity", "Inspirers of Modern Piety"; all presented "in vital relationship with the movements and persons of their environment". Let any such acquainted person then ask himself what matters of great importance in the religious history of western Europe "from Alfred the Great to Schleiermacher" are not treated, and significantly, in these discerning comprehensive biographical sketches. Again, the biographical is the interesting method. Questionnaires among theological students have brought to the surface the melancholy fact that despite the gifts of the persons teaching it, church history is often rated dull. But he would himself be dull indeed who would not find interesting the men and women whom Professor McNeill so vividly and sympathetically presents. A third advantage of this approach to church history this book exemplifies. Most of the teaching of church history in this country is done as a part of the training of men for the Christian ministry. A thing that such men greatly need is to be set in the full stream of the great tradition of Christian character, in order to widen their horizons and enrich their resources. No book would better accomplish this than the one under review.

So Professor McNeill, while not writing particularly for teachers and students of church history, has conferred on them a signal benefit. His book will have a wider appeal, for it will make the history of Christianity real and attractive to general readers.

Some of the subjects of the book were chosen for the author. With regard to other members of his groups he had to choose, and in some cases, as he says, others might have been taken with reason. His principle of choice was to find "makers", original characters and minds who added something to Christianity, and all his subjects meet this requirement. Some of the best sketches deal with less known people such as Peter Waldo and Elizabeth of Thuringia. Naturally the biographies reveal different degrees of admiration, but all are fair-minded and penetrating. It would be an impertinence to praise the scholarship on which they rest. In only a few cases do details somewhat obscure the picture. Even in these it is a satisfaction to know that we are in contact with the facts. Generally the large learning is carried lightly. In several cases, for example Hildebrand, Catherine of Siena and Wyclif there are considerable revisions of the narratives and conceptions that appear in the books generally accessible. A useful bibliography makes a very good book even better.

Auburn Theological Seminary.

Robert Hastings Nichols.

#### MATERIALS FOR A LIFE OF JACOPO DE VARAGINE

By ERNEST CUSHING RICHARDSON. New York: The H. W. Wilson Company, 1935. In three parts: xiv, 75 pages; 135 pages; 99 pages. \$2.00.

That the author began at least half a century ago to collect and study materials relative to the little known life of this once famous contempor-

ary of Dante. is evidenced by the fact that one of the papers assembled in this volume was included in the first volume of the proceedings of the American Society of Church History, published in 1888. Jacopo has at least two valid titles, if not three, to the fame which has so nearly eluded him. He was the first translator of the whole Bible into Italian. As the author of the *Golden Legend*, which was the most frequently copied book before the introduction of printing and one of the most frequently reprinted during the hundred years thereafter, he probably had more readers than any other European writer for two hundred and fifty years. And, beatified in 1819, "the Blessed Jacopo," to quote Mr. Richardson. "seems to be the only man in the history of the church who has been beatified expressly as peacemaker and officially revered as 'minister of reconciliation.'" If there is any cloud upon this last claim it is not from any lack of zeal on the part of Jacopo for composing the intestine strife of parties in his archdiocese of Genoa, but rather that his most ambitious effort as peacemaker between the inveterately warring states of Genoa and Venice ended by the archbishop himself taking charge of the reorganization of the Genoese fleet and sending it out with his blessing for a war that, he hoped, would end all wars in that direction by crushing the enemy. (It need scarcely be added that the desired peace with victory did not come.)

There has been much doubt as to whether Jacopo did, in fact, translate the Bible into Italian. Mr. Richardson's extended researches and the cogency of the argument based upon his findings seem effectively to dispose of those doubts. By this translation, by the wide circulation of the legendary of the saints known as the *Golden Legend*, written in Latin but almost immediately translated into Italian, and by his vernacular preaching throughout the length and breadth of the peninsula, Jacopo exercised an influence comparable with that of Dante in the development and standardization of the Italian language.

The present volume, which is properly described by its title, is not an orderly biography but a collection of materials which any biographer of Jacopo who may come hereafter will find his most valuable resource and his best guide to the documentary sources in which Mr. Richardson has done prolonged and fruitful research.

The University of Chicago.

W. E. Garrison.

## HOW CHRISTMAS CAME TO THE SUNDAY SCHOOLS

By KATHARINE LAMBERT RICHARDS. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1934. ix, 292 pages. \$2.00.

Christmas is such a favorite church festival today that it is difficult to realize that it was once anathema to the majority of American Protestants. As a matter of fact, however, save among Episcopalians, Lutherans, and a few other groups, the religious observance of Christmas was in disfavor until well into the nineteenth century.

The Pilgrim Fathers spent their first Christmas (1620) erecting a public building. Other Puritan settlements of New England were equally indifferent to Christmas. The general attitude was well expressed in 1798

by the Reverend John M. Mason, who wrote: "We renounce the religious observance of Christmas . . . as superstitious and inconsistent with Gospel worship."

The Sunday schools of the leading Protestant churches later fell heir to this prejudice. In the early lesson courses of the American Sunday School Union, which was founded in 1824, the nativity material did not coincide with Christmas. The *Youth's Friend*, the official organ of the Union, made no reference to Christmas except as a date from 1824 to 1846. The *Well-Spring* (Congregationalist) unhesitatingly stated its objection to Christmas observance in 1844 as follows: "One reason why we do not observe Christmas is that no one knows exactly when Jesus Christ was born . . . Another reason is that God has not commanded it." Church school periodicals of the Baptists and the Presbyterians were equally opposed to the observance of Christmas. From 1859 to 1865 the *Sabbath School Visitor* (Presbyterian) omitted any reference to the subject of Christmas while the *Young Reaper* (Baptist) contained no Christmas materials in its December numbers for 1857 and 1858.

Meanwhile, local church groups, influenced by Episcopal and Lutheran practices, and also by frontier forces, began observing Christmas, and the national periodicals were forced to make provision for suitable Christmas materials. The *Well-Spring* for December 25, 1863 greeted the children with a picture of a well laden Christmas tree, but it salved its conscience a bit by saying: "most Protestants keep it (Christmas) as only a holiday." The *Baptist Teacher* as late as 1865 refused to recognize Christmas except as a holiday. Having obtained acceptance as a holiday, however, Christmas was well on its way toward becoming a religious festival. But if today the average Protestant Christmas is still too often merely a holiday and not a holy day, we Protestants may shoulder more than a little blame.

I began reading Miss Richards' volume as a chore; I finished it with enthusiasm. The writer tells her story in vivid, moving English. She, moreover, rests her conclusions upon a body of well-documented sources, in which further fruitful research may well be undertaken.

Duke University.

H. Shelton Smith.

## HISTORY OF THE WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH

By IRA FORD MCLEISTER. Syracuse, Wesleyan Methodist Publication Association, 1934.

This is a history of the Methodist movement in America with special reference to the slavery issue and the founding of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. Since the three other histories of this church are old and out of print, a book of this type fills a need. It relates the story in a breezy manner with one chapter on Methodist origins in England and another dealing with its beginnings in America. Then follows a detailed and accurate account of the founding, expansion, development and world missionary efforts of the Wesleyan branch of the movement.

The author presents the various steps which led to the founding of his church, the primary cause being its unequivocal stand against Negro slavery at a time when Methodism in general seemed to be wavering. Since the consummation of various unification efforts among Methodist groups, this church appears to be the only one still retaining the name Wesleyan in its official title. Historically it has also remained remarkably true to the original Methodist faith. It has stood steadfastly for prohibition and continues to adhere to its early opposition to secret societies. Equally consistent (and laudable) has been its refusal to permit profit-making schemes to displace free-will offerings.

The book is published in a good format, with an adequate index and many illustrations.

The Garrett Biblical Institute.

A. W. Nagler.

### MEDIAEVAL LEGENDS OF CHRIST

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